LETTERS

OF

Madame de MAINTENON.

Tranſlated from the FRENCH.

VOLUME the SECOND.

LONDON:

Printed for L. DAVIS and C. REYMERS,
againſt Gray's-Inn, Holborn.

M.DCC.LIX.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO

Her ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE

Princeſs AUGUSTA.

MADAM,

THE Happineſs of a good Education is obviouſly ſo great, that common Senſe alone obliges the moſt illiterate, to ſet that Value upon it, which in the Eſtimation of the Wiſe it is juſtly entitled to. But for Perſons to

ſorm, to improve, to extend Plans for propagating ſo great a Bleſſing, it ſeems neceſſary, that beſides poſſeſſing Rank and Fortune, they ſhould have had an Opportunity of receiving it themſelves, and have made the proper Uſe of ſo important an Advantage; Circumſtances which, with the higheſt Pleaſure, we behold united in Your Royal Highneſs.

It is upon theſe Conſiderations, Madam, I venture to prefix to the following Letters the Name of your Royal Highneſs, as that of a Perſonage qualified to patronize at Home, Views like thoſe, which the Originals ſo ſucceſsfully contributed to promote *Abroad*.

Tho'

Tho' the preſent, Madam, might appear a proper Opportunity to celebrate your many excellent Qualities, I conſider how much leſs Your Royal Highneſs is inclined to liſten to Praiſe, than intent upon deſerving it, and decline the otherwiſe ſo pleaſing a Taſk. I ſhall therefore, Madam, preſume only to add my Wiſhes, that Your Royal Highneſs may live long the Pattern and the Ornament of your Sex; and the Happineſs of thoſe who ſhall one Day more particularly enjoy the Influence of your Virtues. Virtues ſuperior to the moſt exalted Station, and capable of making Power and Dignity, truly uſeful and amiable.

Give me leave, Madam, to ſubſcribe myſelf with the profoundeſt Humility and Reſpect,

May it pleaſe

Your Royal Highness,

Your Royal Highneſs's

Moſt dutiful and

obedient Servant,

The Tranſlator.

PREFACE,

By the TRANSLATOR.

THE Letters which compoſe this Second Volume, are thoſe chiefly that Madame *de Maintenon* wrote to her Brother, to her adopted Children the Daughters of the poor Nobility of *France*, and to the Ladies ſhe had placed over them. In theſe the Reader may expect to ſee her, as what ſhe really was, ſince ſhe cannot well be ſuppoſed to have converſed on ſuch Occaſions with Ceremony or Diſguiſe: A Circumſtance, we imagine, of ſufficient Recommendation, conſidering the high Rank ſhe obtained at Court, the Myſteriouſneſs of her Station, and the great Noiſe ſhe made in every Part of *Europe*.

But this will be one of the leaſt Advantages to be obtained from the Peruſal of theſe Letters. The Subjects themſelves are of the high-

eſt

eſt Concern, and ſhe ſpeaks of them with the Dignity they deſerve. With uncommon Spirit ſhe pleads the Cauſe of her Sex, and with the greateſt Zeal and Diſcretion endeavours to preſcribe and enforce the propereſt Methods of making it infinitely better; by giving to the Ladies, to whom ſhe had committed the Government of her Daughters, the beſt Inſtructions for forming them *before* Marriage; and to her Daughters themſelves, the beſt Rules of Behaviour, after they had ſubmitted to the Ties of that important and honourable Station.

Madame *de Maintenon*'s Deſire of doing Good was very uncommon: At a Time that ſhe was not worth three thouſand Pounds a Year, beſides living in a manner ſuitable to her Station, and in the Exerciſe of numberleſs Charities, ſhe lodged, cloathed, and maintained an hundred young Ladies, entirely at her own Expence; and this with ſo much Diſcretion, and ſo little Shew, that tho' the *Ruel* where ſhe firſt brought them together, was at no great Diſtance from the Court, it was ſome Time before the King, or thoſe about him, apprehended the leaſt of the Matter.

The Houſe at *Ruel* becoming too ſmall for her growing Family, for ſhe was every Day adding

adding to it, the King granted her another, ſtanding on ſome Lands that had been lately taken in to enlarge the Parks of *Verſailles*. This Houſe was called *Noizy*, and ſoon after they took Poſſeſſion of it, the King, attended by many noble Perſonages, made them a Viſit, and returned as much charmed with Madame *de Maintenon*'s Wiſdom, in planning and regulating ſo noble a Deſign, as he had been before, with her Charity and Courage in undertaking it.

At this Time, *France* haraſſed with continual Wars, was reduced to the loweſt Ebb of Diſtreſs; and of its many miſerable Inhabitants, the female Part of the poor Nobility, were perhaps the moſt ſo. As therefore Madame *de Maintenon*'s Inſtitution was now become publick, they all applied to her for Relief: ſuch as ſhe could provide for, ſhe admitted at her own Expence: and it was only when her Funds were exhauſted that ſhe troubled the King, who ordered thoſe that he deemed proper Objects of Relief, to the ſame Houſe; paying their Penſion to Madame *de Brinon*, whom Madame *de Maintenon* had placed over it.

But

But this was not enough to ſatisfy the generous Soul of one who could feel, not only for the preſent, but for future Generations. Contrary therefore to a Reſolution ſhe had taken, of not aſking the King for any Favours, ſhe on this Occaſion, applied to him to perpetuate his Bounty; and with ſo much Zeal and Energy, tempered with ſo much Diſcretion and Sincerity, that his Majeſty finding ſhe had not exaggerated the *Wants* of his Nobility, any more than ſhe could *their Merit to his Attention*, thought proper to adopt ſo much of her Plan, as was conſiſtent with the Diſtinction due to Perſons of ſuperior Birth, and reſolved to make a Foundation, for the Reception of two Hundred and Fifty young Ladies, who could prove themſelves at once very poor and very noble.

For this Purpoſe, it was thought proper to have another Houſe, more ſuitable to the Founder, and ſituated nearer to the Court; that Madame *de Maintenon* might be the better enabled to reconcile her Duty of attending the latter, with her charitable Fondneſs, to ſuperintend and animate the former. The King paid all the Expence; Madame *de Maintenon* was charged with the Direction of it; and ſhe behaved

in

in it with an Oeconomy unuſual in thoſe who diſpenſe the Liberalities of others.

The Name of this new Houſe was originally *St. Cyr*, and it ſtill retained it, only now and then it was called the Houſe of *St. Lewis*. Thoſe who governed the Houſe were called indifferently ſometimes the Ladies of *St. Lewis*, ſometimes the Ladies of *St. Cyr*. The ſame Modes of Appellation obtained, in Regard to the young Ladies who were educated there.

Madame *de Maintenon* was very far from confining her Views of Education to *St. Cyr*; ſhe erected Schools for Learning, Virtue, and Induſtry in many Places, in which ſhe proved herſelf a better Politician, than if ſhe had furniſhed the Means for taking Towns, gaining Battles, or otherwiſe extending the Territories of her Country.

Among the uſeful Schools erected by Madame *de Maintenon*, we muſt not forget *Gomer-Fontaines*, as ſeveral of the Letters contained in this Volume, are addreſſed to the Abbeſs of that Houſe. For though Madame *de Maintenon* did not found the Abbey itſelf, ſhe may be ſaid to have founded the School there, ſince

ſince the Abbeſs was one of the young Ladies educated at *St. Cyr*, whom ſhe ſent to rectify the Plan of Education purſued at that Place. But this was not all; ſhe was careful not only to aſſiſt her Daughter by frequent Advice, but ſhe paid the Penſions of ſeveral Children there, and occaſionally ſupplied her with Money to ſupport the Abbey itſelf, without which the School could not have ſubſiſted. All who could pay their Penſions were received into this Convent without Diſtinction.

But it is Time to let Madame *de Maintenon* ſpeak for herſelf, in the following Letters: which would, long ſince, have been in the Poſſeſſion of the *Engliſh* Reader, had the *French* Editor purſued his original Plan in the Publication of them.

LETTERS

LETTERS
OF
Madame de MAINTENON.

LETTER I.

From Madame de Maintenon *to Monſieur* d'Aubigny.

February 28, 1678.

FRIENDSHIP enclines me to wiſh that you would not marry, merely for the Conveniency of having a Wife in your Houſe. Make of your's * a rational Being. Her Youth gives me Hopes (if you undo not, on the Spot, all I am aiming at, at a Diſtance) that we ſhall form her.—She has Piety: endeavour

* Miſs *Genevieve Pietre*, Daughter of *Simeon Pietre*, Counſellor to the King in his Councils, Attorney to his Majeſty, and to the City of *Paris*.

to promote it. Your Intereſt is connected with Religion; for though plain in her Perſon, ſhe would find Lovers. Let her never go abroad alone: Yet let her not aſſume the Airs of a great Lady; ſhe will make herſelf ridiculous. Don't keep her under too much Reſtraint; for that would make you ſo. No Familiarity with Men! I earneſtly requeſted her to avoid it. It is very dangerous: your Men in the Provinces love Romping. They'll throw themſelves rudely on a Woman's Bed. None of this Behaviour. Leave her often with Madame *de Miosſens*, who loves us well enough to bear with her. She ſpeaks ill; a trifling Defect: For *French* is learned very faſt. She is much in love with her little Perſon: Three Hours at her Looking-glaſs every Morning are two too many. I don't know what Idea People have given her of us. She every Day ſends to aſk me for ſomething, as if it was the ſame Thing to give her one Gown, or a Dozen. Allow her a certain Sum *per annum* for her cloaths: It will prevent Quarrels that embroil every family. I am ſorry to find ſhe has two Gentlewomen. Two Gentlewomen to wait upon this little Body! Though they were in the Capacity of Servants, which is never the Caſe, it would be ridiculous. But the Thing is done; we'll ſay no more of it. Madame *d'Aubigny* appears to be

be modeſt: Leave her in Poſſeſſion of a Baſhfulneſs ſo becoming, and which ſo many unthinking Huſbands are the firſt to rob their Wives of. She ſeemed to be out of Countenance here, at ſeeing the Duke of *Maine* ſhirt himſelf: I was overjoyed at it: Let her not dreſs before Men. By no Means permit it: Let her every Day ſay her Prayers in public. Be perſuaded it is an Example we owe to our Servants. Even here, where Evil triumphs with ſo much Aſſiduity, and Good with ſo much Negligence, this Duty is not overlooked.

Madame *de la Laigne* has no Reaſon to complain of being overſtocked with Wit; but ſhe is a good Woman. Madame *d'Aubigny* will have no Reaſon to complain of her Heart. I can't account for your Averſion to our Relations. Let her not often ſee, I beg of you, Madame *de Fontmort*. She would forget herſelf; and talk of nothing but the Court—of what I am—of what you will be—and would pity her for not being a Court Lady. Let her ſometimes ſee the *St. Eugenes*: They will uſe her as a Daughter. She is vain. People reſpect her on *our* Account; if they ſhould once bring her to fancy that it is on *her own*, you would have in her the moſt impertinent and inſupportable Creature in the World. Above all Things, don't be too conſtantly with her. Accuſtom her to live with-

out Pleaſures, if you have not a Mind to be ſoon tired of her. Let her habituate herſelf to read good Books; to work; to keep within Doors.

—You'll think it odd, perhaps, that a Woman who never was married, ſhould give you ſo much Advice concerning the married State: But I can aſſure you, that the great Confidence which People have always placed in me, has taught me more in this Reſpect, than my own Experience could have done. I always found, that the greateſt Averſions proceeded from Trifles often repeated. It is only to ſet a little Reſtraint on your Familiarity in the Beginning; to be complaiſant; to be reſpectful to one another; and all Things for the Future will go well; they proceed in a Manner of themſelves, and without Trouble. It is my Wiſh to ſee you happy; and in order to contribute to it, I enter ſo far into this Detail.

—Regulate your Expences. It is Vanity that encreaſes our Wants: Nature gives us ſuch only, as are eaſily ſatisfied. A good Bed; a good Table; an Equipage;—what more would you? The Condition in which we once were, ſhould make us reliſh that we are now in. Compare what you were at your Birth, with what you are at preſent; and I defy you not to think yourſelf happy. You already excite the Murmurs of Envy. Give it the Lye by renouncing thoſe

Expences, which have made you ſo few Friends; thoſe lordly Airs, which have drawn ſo much Ridicule upon us. Who are they that have diverted themſelves moſt at your Expence? Thoſe whom you have entertained with moſt Magnificence. *Your* Family will be *mine*. But they will become Strangers to me, ſhould I ſee you running into Airs that muſt ruin you. I am no more avaritious than yourſelf: Yet I could enjoy Fifty Thouſand Livres a Year, without the Train of a Woman of Quality; a Bed laced with Gold, like Madame *de la Fayette*; or a Valet de Chambre, like Madame *de Coulanges*. Can the Pleaſure it gives them, make amends for the Jeſts it expoſes them to. The Chancellor, her Uncle, is full of Moderation; and the King eſteems him.

Remember, I again tell you, never to ſpeak either well or ill of your Wife. You cannot act a more idle Part. Don't entertain her with Accounts of your Adventures and your Intrigues: She is a Child. You are not enough upon your Guard, and forget yourſelf. Either ſhe does, or does not believe what you ſay: If ſhe believes it not, ſhe deſpiſes you: If ſhe does believe it, ſhe repeats it. But a Moment with us the other Day; and ſhe related your very extraordinary Manner of beating the *Engliſh*. You are afraid of none but me on theſe Occaſions. You

give me Pain whilſt others laugh. When you think to ſhun me, your lurking as you do ſerves only to make you fall into more dangerous Hands.

Your Wife required a longer ſtay here, to qualify her for genteel Company. She appears to be mild: Her Faults are the Faults only of Education.—There are twenty Perſons in my Room, three Children and ten Dogs. I have Leiſure enough, but no Reſt.—Give her a yearly Allowance: It is the only Way to prevent her running into every Sort of Extravagance. I ſhould have mentioned a Thouſand Livres, if ſhe had not ſpent Four Thouſand in four Days. When I ſpoke to her of plain Night-gowns for this Summer, ſhe anſwered me; What! without Gold or Silver! Who would not conclude, that ſhe had been always thus covered? And Yeſterday ſhe did not know what they were. Take Advantage of her Diſtance from her Family. If you inform me of her Behaviour, I ſhall either end her Preſents or Reprimands. She is a Child; and muſt be treated as ſuch. I am, you know, in the educating Way; and am ſenſible how painful it is: Do not therefore loſe Heart.

How goes Mr. *Truc*'s Affair on? If my Credit is not ſufficient, there is greater at my Diſpoſal. In Regard to a Marquiſate or an Earldom,

dom, I know, by Experience, the Court is liberal of them. They are firſt given by Way of Civility: But there are always Rebels. They are ſoon reduced by our Friends and Servants having nothing but theſe Titles in their Mouths.

You are too haſty in charging your Tradeſmen with impoſing upon you; and lie under a miſchievous Error. You will have the deareſt of every Thing; your Laces are more expenſive than the King's; Men never wear them fine, on Account of the continual Waſhing. Fine Laces are fit only for Women, who wear a Handkerchief ſix Months together without having it waſhed. I can't take upon me to adviſe Madame *de la Challoniere* to ſend you her Daughter: Madame *d'Aubigny's* Youth is not a ſufficient Security againſt your Infidelity. Our Couſin is, I believe, a very prudent Girl; but I don't think you ſo very prudent a Man. If I am not much miſtaken, your Wife would be jealous; and ſhe might have ſome Reaſon to be ſo.

I ſhould be glad to ſee you eſteemed. You have been treated unjuſtly, you ſay! That is not quite ſo certain. Give your Enemies, if you have any, Reaſon to bluſh. If you think my Friendſhip important, let me know it. I ſhall be ſatisfied, provided you are. But if you ruin yourſelf, be perſuaded, that yourſelf alone

muſt ſuffer by it; and that I am determined not to ſacrifice *my Poor* to your Extravagancies.

Adieu, dear Brother, ſhould this immenſe Inſtruction diſpleaſe you, you will be obliged to me, at leaſt, for my Intentions. No Attempts towards Wit to Day! I keep it all for the Work I promiſed you, and it will pleaſe you.

LETTER II.

To the ſame.

St. Germain's, March 15, 1678.

I SEND you the fine Work, which you have ſo long waited for*. I beg you would not read it critically: It is eaſier to ſpeak well, than to write ſo. *Nannon* told me, that you were greatly affected with the Mark of Friendſhip I gave you in Regard to the little Boy†. If you had more Confidence in me, you would find me the ſame on all Occaſions. Don't ſeem ſo much in Dread of me. I would have hindered your Favourite *des Rolines* from ruining you. Suffer not your Wife to oppoſe you. You can't love her too much; but in ſerious Matters,

* Probably *The Works of an Author ſeven Years old.* See Vol. I. Letter 76.

† A natural Son of Monſieur *d'Aubigny*, called *Charlot.*

aſſume

aſſume that Authority which the Character of a Huſband, and at your Age, ſhould give you. I write to her by this Opportunity. Don't accuſtom her to ſee our Letters. We may be the more free. You and I make the ſtrongeſt Side; and we ſhall at laſt bring her to Terms. Perhaps ſhe may hate me, but I don't matter it, provided ſhe becomes reaſonable. I am exceeding glad my Letter did not diſpleaſe you. Good Senſe is equal to Experience: And I have been ſo intimately converſant in family Affairs, that I think myſelf qualified to ſpeak of yours. Monſieur *Scaron* allowed me but Five Hundred Livres. Leave your Wife with Madame *de Mioſſens*. When you have a Mind to return let me know it; I will look you out a Houſe. Every Part of *Paris* is indifferent to me: Which do you like beſt? *Cognac* muſt not be given up. You would be deprived of it inſenſibly. Monſieur *Colbert* is under an Affliction, which muſt be left to wear off. I will ſpeak to him. Your Stile is too laconic. People that one loves, are not anſwered by Monoſyllables You ſpeak of Madame *d'Aubigny* in too great a Hurry.

The 19th.

My Letter was interrupted. You know I am not Miſtreſs of my Time. I will ſpeak to Monſieur *de Cruſſol* of the Lieutenant General's

Affair; for don't think I am upon very good Terms with Monſieur *de Montauzier*. We ſhall have a very fine Houſe at *Paris* for 500 Crowns. Let Madame *d'Aubigny* write often to me: I ſhall be complaiſant enough to anſwer her. She will learn by it to write well. I underſtand ſomething of Education. You have but two Things to do: To amuſe yourſelf, and to ſave your Soul: I know thoſe who don't wiſh for any greater Happineſs.

It grieves me, that I ſhould be ever making you uneaſy. But who will ſpeak freely to you if I don't. Your Tradeſman complains of you: And he has Reaſon to do ſo: When a Bargain is made, nothing remains but to pay. The Tradeſmen of *Paris* are not afraid of the Violences of the Governors of *Cognac* *. They compel the greateſt Lords to do them juſtice. When People cannot pay all, they ought, at leaſt, to pay Part. Nothing hurts a Man's Character more, than Want of Punctuality in Money Affairs. I am quite out of Humour with *Maintenon*, on Account of the Crowd of People breaking in upon me. If you come, looſe no Opportunity of ſaying, that I am diſtracted with ſeeing unexpected Viſitors. I may

* Monſieur *d'Aubigny* was actually Governor of *Cognac*.

be thought fantaſtical: But I ſhall, at leaſt, be free. I go there for Quiet, and am ſtifled with Company.

LETTER III.

To the ſame.

Wedneſday, July 12, 1678.

NEVER ſpeak of Buſineſs with Madame *d'Aubigny*'s Relations: People on ſuch Occaſions loſe Temper; and it is never the Way to diſpatch. Take *Viette*. Make uſe of the Time, while I retain my Credit, to bring them to Reaſon. Why do you ſay your Eſtate brings you in but Ten Thouſand Livres a Year? In the firſt Place, it is not *ſo*: The Money you receive from the King, cannot be reckoned inferior to an Income of Fifteen Thouſand. *Maintenon* has made me acquainted with the Value of Eſtates in Land. But when are you to receive Madame *d'Aubigny*'s Portion?

Comfort yourſelf under the diſagreeable Circumſtances attending your Marriage, by viewing the beſt Side of it. It is a Thing done; God has permitted it. Think of your Salvation. Don't game, if you have any Regard for me. Reſiſt Melancholy, to which you are naturally enclined. Come hither when you pleaſe. There will not be wanting People to introduce you. If

you are ſad, you will make me ſo too. You are not ſenſible of half my Tenderneſs for you. The other Day I ſaw you gay, and in good Health; and I am ſtill the better for it. Let us only reflect, my dear Brother, upon what we were ten Years ago, and we ſhall think ourſelves happy.

LETTER IV.

To the ſame.

Friday Evening.

YOU may go to *Maintenon* when you pleaſe, and diſpoſe of it as freely as I could do. Take your Wife there: She will grow tired of it; but it is proper ſhe ſhould learn to ſuffer a little. Mademoiſelle *de la Harteloire* * is pretty good Company. Our Friends are in the Wrong, to think that my Regard for you is any Way impaired. This Suſpicion is founded on our having lived ſo little together, that you appear before me under a Conſtraint, which borders upon Diſtruſt; or, it may be, Reſpect. I wiſh for nothing but your Pleaſure; your Happineſs; your Friendſhip.

I ſpoke ſmartly to Madame *d'Aubigny*, concerning her bad Habits. They eſcape your Notice, becauſe you ſee them often. But it is

* A Relation of *Scaron's*.

certain,

certain, that ſhe has learned to ſpeak through the Noſe; and to laugh with Affectation *. Let her be perſuaded, that it is better to be thought ſerious than ridiculous; ſilent than ſenſeleſs. Adieu. Monſieur *Fagon* is ſure that ſhe eats filthy Things; and that ſhe never will have Health, or Children, till by a long Courſe of good Food ſhe has re-eſtabliſhed her Stomach, and purified her Blood.

Your Monſieur *le Gois* is very importunate. He always ſhews a mournful Countenance: And not only would have me employ my Credit to ſerve him; but even to ſeek for Occaſions of doing ſo. I have been offered an Employment for him at *Blaye*; and he would have one at *Bourdeaux*. I ſhall ſerve him, however, out of Regard to Marſhal *d'Albret*'s Memory. But Affairs ſhould be put into my Hands ready prepared. I cannot beſtow a Minute on my own Buſineſs; and it is expected I ſhould both begin and finiſh that of others! I am juſt going to ſpeak to Monſieur *de Louvois*.

* Madame *d'Aubigny* was a young Lady of Fifteen. See Vol. I. P. 84. 85.

LETTER V.

To the ſame.

Friday 5th, Decemb. 1679.

DON'T be angry with *La France*; 'twas I delayed him. I am not *Dame d'Atour* *: Monſieur *de Villette* ſays I am only Lady of Honour; and that is no troubleſome Employment. As ſoon as the Liſt of Madame *la Dauphine*'s Houſhold is made public, you ſhall be the firſt to know it. Till then, laugh at Reports ſpread by evil minded Perſons, whom Contempt alone is ſufficient to ſilence. Think no more of what you call my Favour; but of your Diſorder. Going in a Coach is bad for it: A regular Diet of no Service. If the Pains encreaſe, a Bath of warm Water. I know more about it than Monſieur *Fagon*. Try the Chair invented by the Abbé *Teſtu*: It is very eaſy. A great Deal of Eaſe; and no Phyſic: That's my Recipe. If you make too free with this Diſorder, it will gain Strength. You ſet too great a Value upon what I do for you. Send the encloſed to Monſieur *de Barillon*'s Mother. I am ornamenting a Cloſet which takes me up greatly. Shall I ſee you next *Sunday*?

* The Lady who dreſſes the Queen.

LETTER VI.

To the ſame.

St. Germain's, March 2, 1681.

IT is a long Time ſince I wrote to you. Sometimes Buſineſs, often Idleneſs. We love certain People: They love us. We are confident of their Affection: We neglect them; and are under no Reſtraint with them. They complain: A Note appeaſes them. My Carnaval was a dull one. Monſieur *Fagon* has ordered me to uſe the Waters of *Ste-reine*: They do me Service. No Lent. I take infinite Care of myſelf; and enjoy great Eaſe. Madame *d'Aubigny* is not more taken up with her Tapeſtry, than I am. Madame *de Fontmort* can give you ſome Account of me. She has been the firſt Victim to the Reſolution I took of ſeeing nobody: My Tenderneſs will ſuffer by it. But I found ſuch Inconveniency in the Exceptions I uſed to make, that I thought it was better to ſerve all alike. I muſt expect to hear ſome Murmurings on this Score. It will be ſaid, and perhaps it may already, that my Brain is turned. But Murmurs are leſs diſagreeable, than the Affairs I uſed to be ſaddled with. Some Journeys have been talked of for this Lent; but they have been ſet aſide. The Court will ſpend eight Days at *St. Clon*; and ſet

out

out from thence on *Eaſter Mondoy*. We ſhall here get ready for the Journey to *Bourbon*, where the Court will reſide the Month of *May*. The Month of *Auguſt* is to be ſpent at *Chambord*; and *September* at *Fontaineblean*. But a Whim may ſpoil this Project. I wiſh it may be a Pregnancy. Monſeigneur is exceeding well. The Dutcheſs of *Richelieu* has been this Fortnight paſt at *Paris*, where the Duke is ſick of a Tertian Ague. Marechal de *Rochefort's* Lady is oftener out of Order than even myſelf. Madame *de Montchevreuil* alone ſupports the Fatigue. She has encreaſed her Flock by the plaineſt Girl imaginable. It is your Mademoiſelle *de Jarnac*. *Laval* triumphed at the Balls. At preſent ſhe is ſick. This is the News of our Houſe, or if you will, our Court: I know little beſides. Tell me what the Letters you have received ſay of me. A thouſand Compliments to Madame *d'Aubigny*.

LETTER VII.

To the ſame.

Verſailles, May 19, 1681.

I HAVE ſeen *Charlot*: He is a wonderful Boy; a downright merry Andrew. He has no Belief at all. I had a Mind to ſend him to a College; But he does not loſe his Time at

Maintenon.

Maintenon. I ſhall go Tomorrow, and ſhall ſtay there one Night: My chief Buſineſs is to ſee my old Women.

The Dauphineſs's Pregnancy is declared: And puts a Stop to all our Journeys, except that to *Fountainebleau.* There is ſome Talk of marrying Mademoiſelle *de Jarnac*; but I don't as yet know to whom. Mademoiſelle *de Laval*, with her ſore Eyes, has been at *Paris* this Fortnight paſt.

I believe there will remain no Huguenots in *Poitou* except our Relations. Methinks they are all coming over. It will ſoon be ridiculous to be of that Religion.

Marechal *de Rochefort*'s Lady is out of Health, I ſhall be ſoon ſo of Courſe. I am not made for Fatigue. However, there is no Uneaſineſs, You know I take great Care of myſelf: I never took any in Compariſon of what I do at preſent.

It might be expected, that Madame *d'Aubigny* ſhould convert ſome of our young Relations.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

To the ſame.

Maintenon, May 23.

YOU did well to give Madame *d'Aubigny* a Sight of *Bourdeaux*, and *Bourdeaux* a Sight of Mademoiſelle *de la Carte*. I ſhall write to Monſieur *Roguelaure* about what you tell me; and I ſhall have no Difficulty in expreſſing a great Deal of Gratitude.

I agree with you in Opinion concerning Monſieur and Madame *de St. Eugenes*; they always exceedingly pleaſed me: I ſhould be glad to convince them of my Eſteem.

I am overjoyed at your being pleaſed with your Wife, and at her not loſing her Piety, at an Age in which it generally is but poorly rooted; and in the Provinces too, where there is but little Devotion. I ſpent two Hours at *Paris*, in my Way here; and paid the blind Man a Viſit.

You are not to be borne with, in Regard to Particulars: You never give me any, and I am quite fond of them. Sell your Houſe at *St. Cloud*, which brings you neither Money nor Pleaſure.

I don't anſwer every Thing you ſay about War and Employments. Peace will ſoon put an End

to

to all these Schemes; at least there are great Hopes of it.

LETTER IX.

To the same.

Maintenon, July 12, 1681.

I HAVE here with me Monsieur and Madame *Montchevreuil*, Madame *de Lencosme*, Mademoiselle *de Mongeron*, Madame *de Fontenay*, and Monsieur *de la Laigne*. Yet I enjoy more Leisure, than at *St. German's*. In Spite of your Inclination to rail at my old Castle, you will like it very well. I see M. *Colbert* every Day; but he thinks what you ask as difficult, as I think it reasonable. So that he has not as yet got rid of me. Let your Wife be weaned from her Relations; if you think otherwise, you may depend upon my not troubling my Head about it: I'd rather do myself Violence, than make you uneasy. Live private. There is no Place where you may be more your own Master than at *Paris*. All consists in beginning well. I am greatly delighted with the Regularity and Devotion of your Family. Enjoy your present Condition. I must again remind you of it; it is very different from what Fortune promised you. We complain of what we are! And, what were we twelve Years ago? Don't hide

your-

yourſelf from me. You are the only one, of all my Friends, who does not place a Confidence in me. If you opened yourſelf to me, you would find in me Helps, Condeſcenſions, Comforts, that you don't expect.

The Farms are diſpoſed of; and, of Courſe, Mr. *Ronvieres*'s Affair compleated. I obtained without Difficulty; but I was obliged to do myſelf great Violence to aſk. I am too well rewarded, ſince you are ſatisfied. If you are at *Paris* about a certain Affair, you can't do better than take the Opportunity of the Court's Abſence to keep yourſelf incog. I ſhould be glad to be informed exactly of the Succeſs of your Remedies, and of every thing that may happen to you. I ſhould be glad you had Children. We muſt recommend every Thing to God. You'll have no longer any Reaſon to ſay, that I moralize at my Eaſe: For you are now richer than I am. We ſhall ſet out Tomorrow for *Fontainebleau*. Change of Places occaſions none in the Diſpoſition of the Stages. The Dauphineſs is well; ſhe has nothing now to wiſh for but a happy Pregnancy. Adieu: I embrace my Siſter in Law. I know no Surgeon, but *Clement*: with whom you are upon no good Terms. I don't think *Turbier* would deceive you.

LETTER

LETTER X.

To the ſame.

Inciſhem, October 20, 1681.

THO' I think myſelf in the Right in every Thing I do for you, and every Thing I require from you; yet I can perceive my Behaviour has ſome Harſhneſs in it. I keep at a Diſtance from my neareſt Relations, and my deareſt Friends. You know my Eſteem for M. *de St. Eugenes.* I thought I ran no Riſk in opening my Heart to him. He will let you know my Reaſons, which I cannot write you. Methinks you make too free with your Conſcience. You have, you ſay, Time enough to mend. A Moment is ſufficient, it is true; but God gives that Moment to thoſe only who aſk it. I don't underſtand the Meaning of the large Preſents expected by Madame *d'Aubigny.* As to Monſieur *Le Gois*, you owe him nothing but Pity. What I have done for you, is in no Sort the Effect of his Care and Aſſiduity: His Affair ended with the Bankruptcy of Monſieur *de Ronvieres.* How then can he pretend to any Share in a particular Favour of the King's, which regarded none but ourſelves; and has no Connexion with M. *de Ronvieres*'s Affairs; which is a pure Gratification of his Majeſty's? Make yourſelf eaſy on this

this Score. You are not obliged to repair either his Loſſes, or his Blunders. I don't know what you mean by repeating ſo often in your Letters, that there are People who would be glad to interfere between us; and others who ſay, we are not too well together. I never changed with Regard to you. I often treat you as a bad Oeconomiſt, and ſometimes mention you as an Example of the little Commerce it is in my Power to have with my Relations, in Order to rid myſelf of their Complaints and Importunities: Is that all? Laugh at every Thing they ſay. I love you. I tell it you, and I ought to be believed. I have read with Pleaſure every Thing you ſay of *Maintenon*. *Charlot* is a very pretty Boy: If you have a Mind for him, he ſhall come to you; if you leave him to me, I ſhall ſoon ſend him to College. Adieu, dear Brother. Tell Monſieur *de St. Eugene* that I cannot write to the Attorney General, but that I deſire the Dutcheſs of *Richelieu* to recommend his Affair to him from me. If he thinks proper to give her a Petition, ſhe will preſent it; and I am ſure he will be ſatisfied with the Dutcheſs. As often as you think yourſelf unhappy, think of thoſe that are more ſo: The Recipe is infallible.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

To Madame de Brinon *.

OUR Houſe depends upon your Head and mine, and theſe Heads will ſoon fall to the Ground. Let us therefore redouble our Cares, that, if we are not to be allowed a great deal of Time to do Good in, we may, at leaſt, do a great deal of Good in the Time that is allowed us. I can only ſupply you with Subjects; your Buſineſs muſt be to educate them. You ſpend your Days in the Service of God; I ſpend mine very unprofitably, and very agreeably. Let us not loſe Patience with our little Siſters. Were they to follow our Advice, *we* ſhould be too happy, and *themſelves* too perfect. They muſt not be permitted to breathe at their Wheels. 'Tis only by accuſtoming them to Work, that they can ever be brought to love it. Puniſh; direct—you are Miſtreſs. You are not to have the bleſſed Sacrament. 'Tis the King that won't conſent to it. The Archbiſhop had a Mind to deprive you of your Croſs, and forbid you to ſing the Office.

* A Nun placed over a Charity-ſchool, founded at *Ruel*, by Madame *de Maintenon*. There is in her *Memoirs* a very entertaining Account of this Inſtitution, which gave riſe to that of St. *Cyr*.

Office. I would have told you of it before, but was loth to make you uneasy. Here is Queen *Christina*'s Letter. 'Tis an admirable Piece. Let not Mademoiselle *de Murçai*'s Presence lay you under any Restraint. I feel your Pains, as if I was in your Place; but I can't get to see you. I am the only Person left with the Dauphiness, besides Madame *de Montchevreuil*. I am well acquainted with Monsieur *Pellisson*'s Troubles, and will speak of them. The Dutchess is here, but cannot prevail upon herself in the important Affair of bringing her Sister to this Apartment. I am satisfied with Madame *de St. Pierre*'s Mildness, and am not surprized at it. She confirms what I told you the other Day, that the bluntest Persons are often of the mildest Disposition. You are a surprising Woman, to praise every Thing that surrounds you! I should pity you greatly, if you did not suffer something for the Sake of God. Do my little Sisters remember, that there are four Prizes to be distributed among them, about the 20th of this Month. The Assistance given us by Madame *de Richlieu* is come very seasonably. They apply to me for Boys for our Manufacture; and it is not possible to get any from *Maintenon*. Don't abate any Thing of your Assiduity to instruct your Pupils, and keep them close to their Work. These Objects are low; but perhaps they will turn out more useful than others that are more striking.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

To Monſieur d'Aubigny.

St. Germain's, April 8.

AULNES and *Saujeon*, which are the two Eſtates the Duke of *Richelieu* had in *Saintonge*, no longer belong to him. To purchaſe them you would have to deal with the Dutcheſs *d'Aiguillon*, who is armed on every Side with Difficulty and Chicane. I ſend twenty thouſand Livres the King gave you Yeſterday. You will receive as much more from Monſieur *Brunet*. The whole makes a conſiderable Sum; but it is eaſy enough to run through. A thouſand Compliments to Madame *d'Aubigny*. I wiſh ſhe had ſome Share in the King's Favours. I no longer ſend her Preſents, for you are richer than I am. I had rather feed my own Poor, than your Horſes. Adieu, my dear Brother. I am ſtill the ſame, and your Siſter; tho' as yet you don't ſeem to know me.

LETTER XIII.

To the ſame.

Verſailles, May 14.

I HAVE received a Letter from you full of Compliments and Thanks; but am far from deſiring any. I am ſatisfied, if you are ſo, and will make a proper Uſe of your good Fortune. It is not, however, inexhauſtible: It is a Stream which may diſappear with the leaſt Drought. I have made a little Excurſion to *Maintenon*, where I have formed ſurprizing Schemes for the Good of the Publick. *Charlot* * is greatly improved, and is a very ſenſible Child. He writes better than I can; and ſince we obtained the Certificate of his Baptiſm, I own my Admiration of him. I thought he had been much older. Your Idea of *Ruel* is a very juſt one. It is a wonderful Place, and I ſpend my Time there very agreeably. God gives a Bleſſing to every Thing that is done there: Our Succeſs exceeds our Hopes: Female Policy triumphs there: You will not be ſurprized at it. War is here the only Topick. As for my Part I believe nothing of it, becauſe I don't deſire it, and am of a

* A natural Son of Monſieur *d'Aubigny*.

pretty

pretty peaceable Diſpoſition. Meſſieurs *de Murcay* and their Siſter go on very well. I am ſorry that any *St-Hermine* ſhould ſhare their Happineſs: I love their Mother, and their Name. No News. My Health is good, but my Face bad. 'Tis *Ruel* and *Verſailles*. Adieu. A thouſand Compliments to Madame *d'Aubigny*. You tell me very extraordinary News of my Favour. The Perſons who ſpread theſe Reports, know more of it than the Favourite herſelf.

LETTER XIV.

To the ſame.

May 21, 1682.

DON'T expect I ſhould tell you which I like beſt, *Aubigny* or *St-Gemme*. I know nothing of either. I can only adviſe you to purchaſe one of them. As to Money, by Way of making a Beginning, you have on one Hand 20000 Livres, and 18000 on the other. It will not be impoſſible to prevail upon Mr. *Brunet* to advance you a Year's Pay of 18000 Livres. You may ſell the Houſe at *St. Cloud* for 9000 more. There is then enough to enter into a Treaty. At leaſt, I know, that though I had my Money ready by me, I was three or four Years paying for *Maintenon*; and what is more,

through an Exceſs of Punctuality I made the laſt Payment ſo unſeaſonably, that I ſhall have it to make a ſecond Time. Theſe were my Thoughts concerning your Affairs. Allowing I was wrong, nothing has been as yet ſpoiled by my Miſtake. Your Brain will be hurt, if you give Credit to what People ſay concerning me. They know but little of my Schemes; and how ſhould they, for I have not any! Drive away ſuch Conceits. Act as is agreeable to you. 'Tis my Fate to be ever under Conſtraints, whilſt my Temper is neither to conſtrain myſelf nor others. I ſhall ſend you a Seal; and greatly diſapprove your Affectation of taking in the Arms of your Grandmother's Mother. It is from her the *St-Hermines* are deſcended. Adieu. I wiſh with all my Heart your Purchaſe was made. It would perhaps give you ſome Employment, and ſuch Employment is agreeable in every Stage of Life. I know the Pleaſure *Maintenon* gave me, when I had Time to think of it.

LETTER XV.

To the ſame.

Verſailles, May 28.

I HAVE lately made an Acquaintance with the Marquis and the Abbé *d'Aubigny de Tigny*. They have given me ſome Informations concern-

ing

ing our Family. This is very late to learn *what one is*; but 'tis always of Conſequence to know it. Maréchal *d'Albret* told me ſomething of it twelve Years ago. I could not without Pleaſure ſurvey a Genealogy of 400 Years plainly made out by Marriage-Contracts, and the Place where the Family divided. Theſe Gentlemen have informed me that the Eſtate of *Aubigny* is to be ſold, as likewiſe that of *St-Gemme*, which belonged to the Head of the Family; and that of *la Jouſſeliniere*, which belonged to their Anceſtors. Methinks, if you have a Mind to lay out your Money, you would do well to recover one of theſe Eſtates, which will be ſold cheap. They pretend you may have the firſt two for 40000 Crowns. Let me know if you have other Views, or if you think it proper that I ſhould purſue this. The Money you expect to receive at the End of this Year, the 20000 Livres I have of your's, and Madame *d'Aubigny's* Portion, which cannot be better diſpoſed of, would be ſufficient to put you into Poſſeſſion. My Health is as uſual: Sometimes the Head-ach, never any other Complaint. There is nothing new, but the Duke of *Maine*'s ſucceeding to the Government of *Languedoc*, vacant by the Death of Monſieur *de Verneuil*, for whom we ſhall go into Mourning next Sunday for a few Days.

'Tis ſaid we ſhall ſpend the Winter at *Verſailles*, *St. Germains* not being ready to receive us.

LETTER XVI.

To Madame de Brinon.

THE Duke of *Maine* has the Government of *Languedoc*. The *Montchevreuils* will be the better for it. Say nothing of his Promotion; they know nothing of it as yet themſelves. The Food of the poor goes on very well. But it is not ſufficient they ſhould have merely enough to live, they muſt have enough to grow; and Madame *de St. Pierre* reckons too exactly with their Appetites. Have my little Girls good Soup? I muſt tell you freely I never ſaw them have half enough. The Queen's firſt Phyſician, and the ableſt in *France*, is on the Road to viſit *Jaquette*. Make uſe of this Opportunity, and get from him ſome Leſſons in Phyſick. Let us take Courage. Let us rear up Children, who, when we are gone, may extend our Plan of Education. Let me, when I arrive, make one in the Occupations of the Houſe, without Interruption to any one. Abbé *Gobelin* is ſatisfied, edified, charmed, and in Raptures with our Community. Adieu, my deareſt. I tenderly love you.

LETTER XVII.

To Monſieur d'Aubigny.

Chambord, October 6, 1682.

I HAVE received a Letter from you by Monſieur *de St. Denis*, whom I have thanked for his Kindneſs. I ſtood for his Daughter with Monſieur *de Chevreuſe*. I have found Madame *de St. Denis* to be the Woman you deſcribed her. I am ſorry you could not go to the Waters. Follow the Directions I gave you, till the Return of the Seaſon.

I greatly dread your ſolitary Diſpoſition. The worſt Company is preferable to thoſe gloomy Thoughts, which People, when alone, are apt to indulge. I have ſeen the Rent Roll of the *Aubigny* Eſtate. The Rents are no great Matter. The Rights are conſiderable. You may recover *St-Gemme*, which likewiſe belonged to the Family.

See theſe Eſtates yourſelf, and conſult about every Thing with Monſieur *de Tigny*, who is worthy your Confidence. Change Situation and Air. Be always employed, but don't apply too cloſely to any Thing. There is no better Remedy. I ſee the Affair of *Courſai* would be a good Thing. But then I ſhould be obliged to

apply to Mr. *d'Ouilly*, and the Credit I am in would make him take my Requeſt for a Command. People ſhould not build upon their own Favour to behave with Incivility, Injuſtice or Violence. Monſieur *Turc* exerts himſelf to avoid paying us. The King was received at *Maintenon* by *Nany* and *la Couture*, who did their Duty very well. He liked the Place greatly. I had left it two Hours before he got there. The Pleaſure Garden begins to look very well. The Trees and Hedge-Rows are pretty well grown, and if it was not for the Winter Inundations, the Kitchen Garden would be in fine Order. My Manufacture diverted him greatly. Beſides my *Normans* employed in making common Linnen, there are five and twenty *Flemmings* juſt arrived, for that Sort they make in *Courtray*, whence I decoyed them. *Charlot* is ſo improved, and behaves ſo well, that I did not know him. He is very ſenſible, and has the Memory of his Family. The Queen aſked him, Who he was? He anſwered, "A little Gentleman educated "by Madame *de Maintenon*." Adieu, dear Brother. I enjoy my Health here very well, and ſpend my Time agreeably. We ſhall ſet out from hence *Monday* the 12th of this Month for *Fontainbleau*, where I am always overwhelmed with the Vapours. I do nothing there but weep, choak, make myſelf uneaſy, and conſider myſelf

ſelf as the unhappieſt Creature in the World. I have taken an *ermined Lion*, when I found it was our Arms. Do the ſame.

LETTER XVIII.

To Madame de Brinon.

I WISH I could pleaſe Madame *de Bonnevaux*, for few can accompliſh that, though ſhe herſelf pleaſes every one. Aſſure her that it is better to be a Philoſopher than a Courtier, and that a ſingle Day ſpent in good Works, is more delicious than the gayeſt Days of this Place appear to be to thoſe, who view us only at a Diſtance. What ſhould I not have to ſay to Madame *Savary*, in reſpect to her moſt amiable Letter? I wiſh I could anſwer it as well in Expreſſion, as I do in Sentiment; but I am overwhelmed, my dear, with Cares, with Viſits, with Projects of Journeys, with Vapours, with Fatigues. You muſt therefore anſwer for me. If it is your Prayers that have obtained fine Weather for us, the Court is greatly obliged to you. But don't you make a Scruple of Intereſting yourſelf with Heaven for the Pleaſure of Worldlings. Call upon me for Money, and for as much as you pleaſe. You would have been much eaſier, had you none but my *Girls* to govern: But I could not prevail on myſelf to confine your Talents to

the Education of Youth. 'Tis true the Queen honoured me with her Picture on St. *Francis*'s Day. I don't deſerve what you write to me on that Occaſion, and I am not afraid of the Deſign you ſpeak of. I ſhall remain at Court as long as God ſees fit. I flatter myſelf you will not grow weary of Mademoiſelle *de Murçai*. She gave me an Account of what you ſuffered, when your Children had the Small Pox. I muſt own I am loth to give your Princeſs* a Meeting. It is to avoid Princeſſes I go to *Ruel*, and your's beſides is ſo full of Affectation and Ceremony, that my Coolneſs and Sincerity ſuffer greatly in her Company. Another Thing is, I am not my own Miſtreſs; and what if I ſhould diſappoint her? I ſhall to-morrow go to *Ruel* out of Complaiſance to you. Contrive that ſhe ſhould be there, but ſettle every Thing in ſuch a Manner, that though I ſhould happen not to come, I may not be thought to have failed in the Reſpect I owe her. Give the *Hotel-Dieu* what you think proper, but conſider that every one gives it ſomething. I find in myſelf a great Affection for our good Undertaking. I wiſh we could do more. Thirty Girls would not require more Care than twenty. I deſire very diſagreable

* The Dutcheſs of *Brunſwick*, one of whoſe Daughters married the Emperor, and the other the Duke of *Modena*.

Things

Things of *Andrew*, but methinks I ſhould not grudge to do them myſelf.

LETTER XIX.

To Monſieur d'Aubigny.

Verſailles, December 1.

I HAVE to anſwer a Letter of your's of the 7th of *November*, one from Monſieur *de Tigny*, and one from Monſieur *Vieux-Fourneaux*. I begin with your's. I am greatly rejoiced that you like *Anjou*, and that you have no Unwillingneſs to purchaſe the Eſtate of *St-Gemme* or that of *Aubigny*. They will come more reaſonable than what you could buy elſewhere. There is nothing vain or ridiculous in giving the Preference to an Eſtate of one's own Name, and that formerly belonged to one's Family. Had I known as much of the Matter ſome Years ſince, as I do at preſent, I ſhould not have bought *Maintenon*. I looked upon the Deſtruction of the Caſtle of *Aubigny* as a favourable Circumſtance, becauſe I had a Mind you ſhould acquire an Income, without any Temptation to ſpend it fooliſhly. Beſides, where could you be more agreeably lodged than at *Cognac*. Yet I find by Monſieur *Vieux-Fourneaux*'s Letter, that you think the Air of that Place is too ſharp for you. Look about you

you: Reſolve upon ſomething: Act for yourſelf on the Occaſion: How ſhould I be able to do your Buſineſs? I have ſcarce Time to think of my own. I have loſt a Law-Suit by not having ſollicited it. In a Word, for a hundred thouſand Reaſons, too long to be inſiſted on, all the Advice I can give you muſt be very vague and uncertain. You have more Leiſure than I. Exerciſe is good for you. You are upon the Spot, and will find Things eaſier than I could. If you have a mind for *Aubigny*, ſee the Gentlemen of the Chapter, and come to ſome Concluſion. They beg I may obtain a Right of Mortmain. This would be procuring them a very great Advantage, in conſideration of their ſuffering you to recover an Eſtate that belonged to your Family. People who intend to deal honeſtly, ſhould require no Favour or Indulgence. If the Year of their Purchaſe is not expired, you may enter upon the Eſtate in Right of your Name: If 'tis too late, ſee if they will do you that Favour, but don't buy it. If you would rather have *St-Gemme*, I will apply for it to Monſieur *de la Rochefoucault*: but let us take no Steps, till they are neceſſary. 'Tis not the good Air of *Anjou* that has done you Service, but Exerciſe and Employment. You are naturally indolent, and are apt to indulge a melancholy Diſpoſition, in conſe-

quence

quence of which you might have expected low Spirits much ſooner. You do well to keep Monſieur *de Vieux-Fourneaux*. He is a Man that could ſerve you in more Reſpects than one, and whom you ſhould engage to remain with you. I make you no Anſwer about Monſieur *Arnaud*. You know I never intermeddle in ſuch Affairs. You can't do better than leave Madame *d'Aubigny* at Madame *de —— Mioſſens:* She will be good Company for her. We muſt not be tired of our Endeavours to convert that Lady. 'Tis very true that the Queen honoured me with her Picture at *Chambord*. I don't Care to ſpeak of theſe Things; and Favour, in my Opinion, is not more becoming than Modeſty. Don't be uneaſy at my not telling you any Thing; you'll hear enough of me, and I ſhall never be idle, when I can ſerve you. I again tell you, I will not take upon me the Particulars of your Purchaſe; it is not in my Power. I have bought an Eſtate, without having been able to go and ſee it. Adieu, my dear Brother; never be alone, if you have not a Mind to loſe your Senſes.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

To the ſame.

Verſailles, January 18, 1683.

I SHALL not always do every Good in my Power, but then I ſhall never prevent any. This is a very ſerious Prologue to my telling you, that if your taking Home the young Lady depends on my giving her my old Petticoats, ſhe is heartily welcome to them. But are you ſure the Union, that ought to ſubſiſt between Madame *d'Aubigny* and you, will not ſuffer by it. I muſt own I cannot look upon *Cognac* as a diſmal Solitude. I retain a very agreeable Idea of it. Your Imagination is diſordered. Go to the Waters, and take your Wife with you. Nothing, it is true, is more diſagreeable than to have to deal with Corporations: Chicane, Miſtruſt, Delay, Uncertainty, are generally the Conſequence: I ſhould therefore prefer *St-Gemme*. Nobody here is free from a Cold: I have got one, but 'tis very ſlight. Let Madame *de Fontenai* prate on. People will ſpeak even of the greateſt Princes. For myſelf, I am upon the Stage, and muſt expect either to be hiſſed or clapped. I wiſh you on this Occaſion all the Tranquility I enjoy myſelf. Tell Madame *d'Aubigny*, that if the Letter

ter s entirely of her own Compoſition, ſhe muſt be vaſtly improved. Her Stile is as fine as her Writing. 'Tis impoſſible to write with more Elegance, more Delicacy, or Tenderneſs. Adieu, Sir. Think of your Salvation; and don't neglect to divert yourſelf.

LETTER XXI.

To the ſame.

April 29, 1683.

YOU are not ignorant, I believe, that I am ſtill alive, and even enjoy my Health better than ever. I don't know who goes to *Vichy*. Madame *de Montchevreuil* was to have gone to *Bourbon*, but her Journey is broke off. You have Senſe enough to conduct yourſelf. You muſt liſten a great deal, ſpeak little, avoid thoſe lordly Airs, which are unbecoming even in Kings; and behave with that Air of Modeſty and Simplicity, which looks ſo well in private Gentlemen. The Abbé *d'Aubigny* negociates the Affair of *St-Gemme* without your appearing in it. If you have a mind for an Eſtate, that, I think, is in every Reſpect elegible. The Price is reaſonable: No Houſe: A Wood: Fine Privileges: Belonged to the Family. Our Summer will be ſpent in Travelling. We ſhall ſet out for

for *Burgundy* the 6th of *May*, and croſs *Alſace*. We go to *Betfort*, and, for the third Time, to *Straſburg*. We ſhall be back by the 24th of *July*, and after ſpending the Month of *Auguſt* here, go in *September* to *Chambord*, in *October* to *Fontainebleau*, and in *November* to *Verſailles*. The Dauphineſs ſtays behind: She is pregnant; and we are all tranſported at it. Mademoiſelle *de Laval* will ſoon be married. The King intereſts himſelf on the Occaſion, and you know it is uſual with him to ſucceed. Monſieur *du Maine* continues a very worthy Man, and will be of our Party. Madame *de Montchevreuil* is in a Sort of languiſhing Condition, and I am in ſome Pain about her. I lead a very eaſy, ſolitary Life. This Miſs *Coublars* is no Relation of ours: I have enquired about it. Adieu.

LETTER XXII.

To the ſame.

Verſailles, May 21, 1683.

I HAVE heard ſomething of you by your Phyſician. Mr. *Tagon* eſteems him greatly. I have wrote to you by the Dutcheſs of *Noailles*. I hope the Waters will do you Service. I believe I already informed you in what Manner the Summer has been laid out, and that the

Dauphineſs

Dauphineſs will ſpend it here, for Reaſons that every body is greatly pleaſed with. Mademoiſelle *de Laval* was Yeſterday married to Monſieur *Roguelaure*, whom the King has created a Duke, as his Father was. Have you heard that Monſieur *de Montchevreuil* broke his Arm? He will not be able to follow the Duke of *Maine*. Some talk of Mademoiſelle *d'Hamilton*; others of Mademoiſelle *Leuveſtein*, Niece to the Biſhop of *Straſburg*. — You have now all my News: Let me have ſome of your's. Every Thing will go well, if you but add to the Waters, that Tranquility which is the moſt eſſential Remedy of the two.

I ſhould be glad to take a Journey with you, to convince you that all Women are not equally hard to be pleaſed on Mountains and in Vallies. The Deſcription you give me of your Wife's Uneaſineſs has made me laugh heartily: I could not help thinking myſelf preſent with her, you deſcribed her Situation in ſo natural a Manner.

I purpoſely avoid appearing in the Affair of *St-Gemme*, becauſe the Time would have been ſpent only in Compliments, and without coming to any Concluſion. And in Matters of *meum and tuum* People ſhould deal like *Turk* and *Jew*. I am ſorry Madame *d'Aubigny* does not underſtand the Vapours as well as I do. She might then be

be of great Service to you. In theſe Diſorders the Patient finds more Relief from others than from himſelf. I gueſs at the Effect they muſt have on a Man of your ſullen and ſilent Diſpoſition. But ſhan't you have Children after drinking theſe Waters?

LETTER XXIII.

To Madame de Brinon.

THE Queen's Death, for which I am inconſolable, draws upon me ſo many Letters and Viſits, that I have not Time to breathe. I am overjoyed at the Devotion to St. *Canida*. I have ſeen the Fragment of the Prophecy you ſent me: We can only addreſs our Prayers to Heaven on the Occaſion: God always does what is beſt. I ſhall be glad to know what People ſay of it. I don't think that Huſbands were thought of at the Queen's Funeral. I heard them give the ſame Orders about it, that were given about that of the Queen-Mother; but perhaps they were omitted to avoid the Pilfering committed at the Queen-Mother's Interment. Yeſterday the King gave Mademoiſelle *Scudery* a Penſion of two thouſand Livres: You have too great a Regard for her not to have the firſt Notice of it. The longer I live, the ſtronger grows my Reſolution not to hoard. I am ſtill in Pain about

Madame

Madame de St. *Pierre*'s Œconomy, and afraid of my little Girls having too much Learning, and too little Bread. It is true I was at my Devotions laſt *Tueſday*, after a Night ſpent in Tears and Affliction. I ſcarce ever ſaw a worſe Library, than that of which you ſend me a Catalogue. Whatever Deſire or Occaſion I may have to make a Collection of good Things, I can ſee nothing in it worth Notice, but the Meditations of St. *Thereſa*, and the Biſhop of *Condom*'s Works. Don't be tired of getting the King prayed for: He ſtands now more than ever in need of Grace, to perſevere in a State contrary to his Inclinations and Habits. Madame *de Brunſwick* excites my Compaſſion; I ſee no Remedy for her Misfortunes. Her Daughter would have employed and diſtracted you too much. Give yourſelf up entirely to God and to our poor Children, and deſpiſe the Grandeur of the World.

LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

To the ſame.

Auguſt 22, 1682.

I CAN very well ſpend three Months without ſeeing thoſe, whom 'tis imagined I ſee every Day. There is no Anſwer to make concerning *Lewis* and *Frances*. 'Tis all Folly. I would only be glad to know, why ſhe would not conſent? I ſhould never have imagined that ſhe would be the Perſon to make an Objection. See Mademoiſelle *Scudery*, and let me know the Reſult of your Viſit, good or bad: Here is a new Scene which awakens the Attention of the Publick. I am glad St. *Canada* ſhould work Miracles, but I give myſelf no Concern about her Miracles making Money. I ſhall give the Marchioneſs ſome of her Relicks. Adieu: I am quite vexed I can't embrace you, nor ſee my little Girls, nor even that Cow-houſe I take ſo much Pleaſure about.

LETTER XXV.

To the ſame.

September 1, 1683.

I AM overjoyed at the Bleſſing we have drawn down upon *Ruel*. I always return from it more and more taken with the Girls. I am greatly concerned I did not perceive you in the firſt Tranſports of the agreeable Viſion you had in my Chamber. Yeſterday I ſaw the Plan of *Noizy**. The Repairs can't be finiſhed before *Lent*. I ſhall loſe no Time in forwarding them, ſince the Detachment I have diſcovered in you from worldly Concerns, has ſo much encreaſed my Eſteem and Friendſhip, that I long for nothing more than to be able to ſerve God in Conjunction with you. Our Manner of laying out the Place has been thought very judicious. I ſaid we would diſpoſe of the inſide to our own Fancy. I know theſe Gentlemen: They would ſettle Things in the moſt regular Manner; but it would be at the ſame Time the moſt diſagreable. We muſt turn every Thing to Account. We ſhall have the leſs to aſk, and this is to me the greateſt

* A Place to which Madame *de Maintenon*'s Charity School was removed from *Ruel*.

Happineſs,

Happineſs. Nothing but *Noizy*, and an entire Solitude, can enable me to fulfil my Duty, and live independent. We have the Archbiſhop's Approbation. I earneſtly requeſt you may not ſpeak of him to any one but myſelf: I except nobody. By what I have ſeen, I ſhould be glad the Princeſs of *Brunſwick* was with us: But our Maſter's Taſte differs from ours, and you could never expect to pleaſe him, but in ſhutting yourſelf up entirely from the World, with God and our Children. People who are not arrived at Perfection, have ſuch high Notions of it! They don't conſider the Neceſſity there is of breathing a little, and how agreeable it is to converſe with a reaſonable Woman, after having ſpent the whole Day in tutoring a Parcel of Children. Be chearful: Depend upon it, you loſe nothing. Things may change, nay, I am almoſt ſure they *will*. It is your Piety that makes you look upon a Caſtle in the Park of *Verſailles*, as a Hermitage in the Deſarts of the *Thebair*. Don't waſte yourſelf with uſeleſs Affliction, and leave the reſt to my Care.

LETTER

LETTER XXVI.

To Monſieur d'Aubigny.

Pont á Mouſſon, All-Saints-Day, 1683.

I AM not ſo much ſurprized at your having already begun to ſpend the eighteen thouſand Livres, which yet you are not to receive till the End of the Year; as I am at your expecting the Farmers-general ſhould pay you the Money before it becomes due. They'll do no ſuch Thing. This Affair then, ſo conſiderable in itſelf, ſo well conducted, ſo certain, will not make you eaſy. I am grieved to the Heart to be obliged to tell you diſagreeable Things. But who can poſſibly be ſincere, and diſſemble at the ſame Time? Methinks, after what I have done for you, the People can't ſay we are not upon good Terms: They don't believe it at Court. What happened at *Fontainebleau* made a great Noiſe. How kind was it of the King, himſelf to remove every Difficulty: And you would have him order theſe Gentlemen to pay you before-hand. What would he ſay, were he to ſee you aſk a Favour with more Importunity, Uneaſineſs and Tyranny, than you would be known to exact a Debt. I can therefore do no more than beg of

M. *Brunet*,

M. *Brunet*, as my particular Friend, to ſerve you, if poſſible, on this Occaſion. Adieu. We ſhall be at St. *Germain*'s the 17th. I ſhould ſee you there with great Pleaſure, could I but ſee you contented. But I muſt own, that my Relations are ſo little ſenſible to what I do for them, and ſo very ſenſible to what I cannot do, that my Correſpondence with them is a Source of perpetual Vexation to me. Yet no Vexation ſhall hinder me from loving you.

LETTER XXVII.

To the ſame.

Verſailles, March 1, 1684.

I Should never have thought of your making yourſelf ſo uneaſy about my Health. The Diverſions of the Winter were ſo numerous, and at the ſame Time was I ſo tormented with my Head-ach, that I ſpent the whole of it, either in ſtruggling with Pain in my Bed, or with Grief in the King's Apartments. The Box muſt be arrived by this Time: It is not magnificent: You know I value myſelf upon my Oeconomy. I wait with great Impatience for the News of Madame *d'Aubigny*'s ſafe Delivery; yet am I in no Pain about the Sex. I have my Reaſons for being thus indifferent. I am very well ſatisfied with *Manceau*; if he goes on

as

as he has begun, I ſhall not readily part with him. You have, in him, made me a very good Preſent. The War afflicts me. It will keep us from this Place all the Summer. The King is to ſet out for the Army the 10th of *April*. The Day is yet at a Diſtance; but my Attachment to him makes it preſent. The Dauphineſs has declared that ſhe intends to go to the Frontiers, to be nearer at Hand to receive News. She is in the right. But theſe little Conſolations don't hinder me from conſidering the War as a great Evil. Adieu. Write to me often, and be perſuaded, that ſick or well, careful or careleſs, in Favour or in Diſgrace, I am always the ſame for you. *Charlot* is a downright Original. I ſhall ſoon ſend him to a College. The Duke of *Maine* made me a Viſit Yeſterday, and ſpoke of nothing but you. 'Tis not true that I ſaid I was ſatisfied with Mr. *Arnoud*. Madame *de Lenceſme* has made ſeveral Propoſitions to me, but I refuſed every one. I never loved to rail againſt any one, and at preſent leſs than ever. I ſhall ſee the Gentleman you converted, whenever *Manceau* thinks proper to introduce him. Journies give me no Uneaſineſs, but I hate Campaigns. Beſides we ſhall be ſo little with the King! The Controller General thinks you would do well to lay out your Money at the

Town-houſe at the Eighteen-penny * Intereſt, which he thinks will anſwer better than the Cheſt of Loans. Comfort yourſelf for the Delay of Madame *d'Aubigny*'s Delivery. Heroes are at leaſt ten Months in the Womb.

LETTER XXVIII.

To the ſame.

Verſailles, June 18, 1684.

I Adviſed you not to ſettle at *Paris*, for no other Reaſon, than that it would look odd to have you ſo very near one, and yet never to ſee you. But Counſel differs from Command. Beſides the Impropriety there is in taking upon myſelf to direct you, it is my Intention never to lay you under ſo much as the leaſt Reſtraint. I wiſh for your Happineſs juſt as earneſtly as I do for my own. Our Conditions are different. Mine is turbulent and ſplendid, your's calm and obſcure. The Wiſe will always prefer your Mediocrity to my Elevation. 'Tis God that has raiſed me; and he knows I did not ſeek after it, nay, that I did not even foreſee it. I ſhall never riſe higher. I am already indeed

* This is a common Way in *France* of expreſſing the Rate of Intereſt, or of Taxes; the Eighteenth-penny is about 5 ½ *per cent.*

but

but too high. If my Relations ſuffer by my Promotion on the one Hand, they will be Gainers by it on the other. I do what I think is my Duty. My Reaſons may be faulty; but my Intentions are upright. I love your Daughter, and ſhould be well enough pleaſed ſhe were my Heireſs. But Madame *d'Aubigny* won't ſtop there. I am ſenſibly afflicted at the Dutcheſs of *Richlieu*'s Death. 'Tis God that has taken her from us; let us ſubmit to his Will. We ſhall ſoon follow her. 'Tis not lawful for Chriſtians to grieve. All theſe Deaths ought at leaſt to teach us to die. Write to me often. I ſhall ſometimes anſwer you.

LETTER XXIX.

To the ſame.

Verſailles, June 25, 1684.

YOU did well to viſit Maérchal *d'Eſtreés*. You have nothing to do; and that's no great Misfortune. Divert yourſelf, and mind your Salvation. You will know more than thoſe, who give themſelves ſo much Trouble.—I give you Orders! I muſt be mad to think of it. I know not what you mean by *the Beauty of the*

*Cauſe**. Have you a Mind I ſhould repeat what I have already wrote to you on that Head? Don't ſee Monſieur *Arnaud*. 'Tis almoſt impoſſible that ſuch Behaviour ſhould not provoke you, and this is not a Reign for violent Proceedings; beſides there is always ſomething ſcandalous in Money-Affairs. When I received the News of your being a Father, Well, ſaid I to myſelf, here is an Infant that will unite them. I now find, with great Concern, that her Temper is diſagreeable to you: And do you imagine there is nothing diſagreeable in your own? Why are you a Man, if not to bear with ſuch a Child? Of what Uſe is your Age and your Senſe, if they contribute not to make you more patient? What Tyrants are Men? They love unbounded Liberty themſelves, but allow none to others: Shut up a poor Wife, while themſelves ramble without Reſtraint; and think her too happy in receiving them, when they are pleaſed to return: Require a thouſand Condeſcenſions; themſelves condeſcending to none but their Miſtreſſes. For my own Part I would give myſelf little Trouble

* Madame *de Maintenon* had told him, in a former Letter, that the Cauſe of her not being able to ſee him was ſo beautiful and glorious, that he ought to rejoice at it; and he had, it ſeems, rallied her on the Expreſſion.

to

to entertain a Huſband, who gave himſelf none to entertain me. Your Wife's Virtue and Submiſſion is, by all Accounts, ſuch as ſhould oblige you to treat her in the moſt reſpectful and affectionate Manner. Is it ſurprizing that at your Return Home, you ſhould diſcover in her the Remains of that Melancholy, which your Abſence had occaſioned. Conſider my Experience as your own. Let me ſeem to have lived for you, as well as for myſelf.

Verſailles gives me Health, and the Peace with the *Dutch* gives me Joy. That with *Spain* will ſoon follow, and then I ſhall be rid of the Uneaſineſs, occaſioned by a War and its ſhocking Conſequences. The Court is very gay and brilliant. The Dauphineſs is no longer ſhut up. She is as eager to ſhew herſelf in publick, as ſhe was ſome Time ago ſhy of being ſeen. She has for the King all the Condeſcenſion he deſerves. He is very well pleaſed with her. There reigns the greateſt Harmony in the Royal Family. Madame *d'Arpajon* fills her Poſt very well. The Number of the Dauphineſs's Maids of Honour will ſoon be compleat. The Foreigners will have the Advantage over the *French* Ladies, for we have nothing that can be compared with the Beauty of Mademoiſelle *de Leuveſtein*, the Biſhop of *Straſburg*'s Niece, who

has been juſt named; or that of Mademoiſelle *Hamilton*, who will be ſoon added to them. Mademoiſelle de *Murçai* comes on very well, and is one of our beſt Dancers. But while I exert myſelf for the *Villettes*, I perceive that a little Girl, but two Months old, lies much nearer to my Heart; and I often think of the Pleaſure I ſhall have in marrying her, if my Life and my Favour laſt but twelve Years longer. Adieu. I embrace you, and love you more tenderly than I tell you, or you yourſelf imagine.

LETTER XXX.

To the ſame.

Verſailles, July 11.

WHERE's the Reaſon for ſaying I wrote you a melancholy Letter? I have no Cauſe to be melancholy, and, generally ſpeaking, nobody can be leſs ſo than I am. I ſpoke to you of Death, becauſe I often think of it. I prepare myſelf chearfully to meet it. I wiſh I could prevail on you to do the ſame. 'Tis you I love, and not your Life. My Tenderneſs for you keeps me conſtantly employed in praying for your Salvation. Your being a Philoſopher ſignifies little; you muſt be a Chriſtian.

The

The King goes to *Chambord* the 15th of *September*, and from thence to *Fontainebleau* till the 15th of *November*. Make uſe of that Interval to come to *Paris*. Don't liſten to the fooliſh Diſcourſe of People who envy us. I do my beſt on every Occaſion. I have nothing to reproach myſelf with concerning you. Think of our former Situation. Did you then diſcover at a Diſtance *thirty thouſand Livres a Year?* Let not my preſent Condition diſturb the Happineſs of your's. 'Tis a perſonal Adventure, which, as you very well remark, admits of no Partnerſhip. You enjoy Peace and Plenty. Every Thing beſides is mere Bauble. Except thoſe who fill the higheſt Stations, I know none ſo unhappy as thoſe who envy them. Did you but know what it is! If I live long enough to effect it, my Niece, ſhall be well married. The Thoughts of it comfort me for the Loſs of my Liberty. You ſay nothing of her Chriſtening. Who ſtood for her? Is ſhe pretty? What's her Name? I'd be glad ſhe had a pretty one. I am very well, and grown a little fat; Fleſh becomes old People better than the Phthiſick. Monſieur *de Montauſier* has ſhewn me a Letter he received from Father *Chavrand*, who has made your Panegyrick. I read it with Pleaſure; chriſtian Virtues are the Subject of it: As to moral

ones I have long known you to poſſeſs them. I am far from devout, my dear Brother; but long to be ſo; I am perſuaded that Devotion is the Source of all Happineſs.

LETTER XXXI.

To Madame de Brinon.

1684.

HAPPILY for you I was interrupted Yeſterday Evening; I ſhould otherwiſe have worried you with Leſſons of Morality. I ſpoke this Morning to Monſieur *Bontems*. We ſhall remove after the next Holyday. I wiſh that at my Return I could find our little Girls in an uniform Dreſs. I think Black a very ſad Colour. The King would like Blue. I ſhould like Green. You muſt decide. I ſhall be inconſolable, if I can't be at *Noizy* by Nine o'Clock. I hope we ſhall both of us do much Good. Don't countenance my Servants that are to aſſiſt you, in any Pleaſantry or Freedoms. Our little Girls will have ſufficient Amuſement, when well ſhut up. The Court is in the King's Apartment. They play there, they yawn, they laugh; my Employment is to write to you. Let our Houſe be a Model for others, not to draw Praiſe upon ourſelves, but to engage the

Great

Great to multiply theſe uſeful Eſtabliſhments! Don't be troubled at my refuſing you any Thing. My Tenderneſs for you encreaſes with your Virtue, and I make no doubt but 'tis God that unites us. Tell me my Faults, but don't praiſe me.

LETTER XXXII.

To Monſieur d'Aubigny.

Verſailles, July 18, 1684.

ONE of our Relations muſt ſtand for your Daughter; for it would be very ridiculous to wait for Monſieur *Barillon*. I ſhall be one of her Sponſors with the greateſt Pleaſure. People ſpeak too much of me; both to my Advantage and otherwiſe. I always heard it ſaid, that Women ſhould ſtudy to be forgot. God has been pleaſed to diſpoſe otherwiſe of me. The Air of *Verſailles* is admirable. Formerly there was a Scarcity of Water, and thence ſo much Sickneſs. Now 'tis well ſupplied. No Doubt you have heard of the Propoſals made for Mademoiſelle *de Murçai*. She is but thirteen Years and three Months old. I tell you as a Secret, that I receive at *Noizy* young Ladies, whoſe Penſons are paid by the King. I ſpeak of it as cautiouſly as poſſible, for Fear of being

worried. I would be glad the Country, where I was born, had a Share in this Charity. If you hear of any young Lady that has been converted, let me know her Name, her Age, her Family, and it's Circumſtances. Madame *de Brinon* will have none of your Monſieur *Chandelier*. 'Tis impoſſible to be both Pariſh-Prieſt and Chaplain at the ſame Time. Adieu. Take him yourſelf. If you don't want him to ſay Maſs, you will at leaſt have the Pleaſure of beſtowing a Penſion of two hundred Livres a Year.

LETTER XXXIII.

To the ſame.

Verſailles, September 3, 1684.

I See Things as on the Spot, and can't be concerned at your being unemployed. I am very ſorry, not for your Excluſion, but, for the ill Offices to which you owe it; and I can ſcarce forgive your Enemies. But the great Service they do in the main diſarms my Reſentment. I don't forbid you *Paris*. I ſhould be very unjuſt, if I made uſe of my Favour to tyrannize over an elder Brother, whom I ought to reſpect. I have told you a hundred Times over, that it is not proper that I ſhould ſee you often, and therefore I ſhould be better pleaſed you remained at a Diſtance

Diſtance from the Capital. I muſt continue to tell it to you again and again, as long as I find in your Letters any Uneaſineſs and Bitterneſs on that Head. Be perſuaded that I can do nothing but what *I do*. Every one tells me that your Daughter is handſome. Has ſhe as large a Mouth as ſhe ought to have, if ſhe reſembles either you or Madame *d'Aubigny*. Mademoiſelle *de Murçai* ſhall not be married without your Knowledge. Any one but myſelf would raiſe her to the Clouds, but you know my Temper. At all Events ſhe will be better provided for than ſhe could expect, had I remained in my original Nothingneſs. We grow old. Let us think of Death. Can there be any Evil in it for a true Chriſtian?

LETTER XXXIV.

To the ſame.

Chambord, September 27, 1684.

I Make no Doubt of what People ſay to you. They would fain make you angry with me, and perhaps engage you in ſome Extravagancies, which would bring Ridicule upon us both. If I would, I could not make you Conſtable *; and if

* This was formerly the greateſt Poſt in *France*. At preſent they only fill it on extraordinary Occaſions.

Monſieur

if I could, I would not. I am incapable of aſking any Thing unreaſonable from him to whom I owe every Thing. I would not conſent to his doing for me a Thing I thought above me. Theſe are Sentiments by which perhaps you ſuffer; but if I had not the Honour which inſpires them, I ſhould not be where I am. Adieu, dear Brother. I am very well, except a few Fits of the Head-ach, which I make no Account of.

LETTER XXXV.

To the ſame.

Chambord, October 3, 1684.

I AM overjoyed to find that you approve of my Eſtabliſhments. The Manufactory and *Noizy* are my favourite Places. You could not pay your Court to me in a more agreeable Manner, than by praiſing both one and the other. As to *Maintenon*, it is ſomewhat neglected. There can be no great Pleaſure in thinking of

Monſieur *d'Aubigny* was, it ſeems, the very Reverſe of his Siſter. He was fit for little, and expected every Thing, She was equal to any Thing, and in a Manner aſked for nothing. The Account given of this Gentleman in Madame *de Maintenon*'s Memoirs is well worth the Reader's Peruſal.

a Houſe, that one never ſees. It will be no bad Seat for your Heireſs. How long will you ſtay at *Paris?* Let me hear from you, and tell me every Thing you intend to do. We ſhall remain here till the 12th of this Month, and at *Fontainebleau* till the 15th of the next. There is good Diverſion at this Place. The Weather is very fine, and the Court very gay. The King is out a Hunting all the Day. At Night there are other Amuſements. The Dauphineſs does Wonders, and every one is pleaſed with her. We eat every Day at the King's Table, and it creates a very agreeable Familiarity. One Day there is a Ball, and a Comedy the next. But all theſe Pleaſures can't conſole me from being abſent from *Noizy*. 'Tis a Paradiſe to me; and will be more ſo in a ſhort Time, when I ſhall have a hundred young Ladies there under my Government. The Vacancies are all filled up. Adieu, dear Brother. I ſhall be glad to ſee and embrace you. Let your Dreſs be modeſt, and in Taſte. I am in Pain about your making too great an Appearance. See how others act, and don't truſt to your Tradeſmen or Taylors.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVI.

To the ſame.

Verſailles, April 7, 1685.

YOU inſiſt upon a Letter every Month. Here is one for *April*. I hope I ſhall not diſappoint you, as your Expectations are reaſonable, and ſo well ſuited to the little Leiſure I have. The Journies to *Noizy* are more frequent than ever, the Viſits more regular, and the Evening Walks have begun to take Place. Gueſs at my Pleaſure, when I return along the Avenue, at the Head of one hundred and twenty-four young Ladies that are now fixed there; amuſing myſelf with providing for all their Neceſſities.

Monſieur *de Louvois* arrived Yeſterday Evening from *Maintenon*, where he directs every Thing to great Advantage. He is rebuilding the Caſtle belonging to the Park, and doing a thouſand Things beſides, which I have not Time to acquaint you with, that will greatly embelliſh your Eſtate. Monſieur *de Montchevreuil* and you will no longer be in any Pain about the Bridge, for they are making it both wider and firmer. *Noelle* has ſometimes forty Perſons in his Houſe. He is obliged to ſtow them even in

the

the Garrets. There are ſix thouſand Peaſants at Work. Money circulates there very briſkly; and every one perceives it. Be a good Huſband, a good Father, a good Governor: Be a good Chriſtian, and you will be all theſe. Don't make yourſelf uneaſy about *Maintenon*. The Damages done there will be more than repaired, and that in a royal Manner. I embrace you moſt affectionately. I am obliged to you for having left *Paris* without taking your Leave of me. Never doubt of my Friendſhip. It would be doing me great Injuſtice.

LETTER XXXVII.

To the ſame.

Sunday, June 3.

THE King is more troubled with the Gout than ever. The Siege goes on very well. We gain Ground daily without loſing any Perſon of Note. The Prince of *Orange* has not as yet quitted his Camp; he is not ſtrong enough to relieve *Namur*. There is Reaſon to expect every Thing will go on well, and that God will bleſs the King's Undertakings.

We are certainly in the filthieſt Place in the Univerſe: But we often get News, and that is what

what we came for. I enjoy my Health very well.

I am very ſorry for all the Vexation Madame *d'Aubigny* gives you, and ſhall not trouble you with an Account of what I ſuffer. We muſt endeavour for the beſt, and leave the Iſſue to God. We are to ſuffer: 'Tis the Buſineſs of this Life. But we muſt turn our Sufferings to Advantage, by accepting them in a penitential Spirit. I do nothing but write; and I know you too well, to lay myſelf under any Reſtraint, when I have to deal with you. What is a longer Letter? Often a greater Vexation.

LETTER XXXVIII.

To Madame de Brinon.

1685.

I SEE you often, but ſpeak to you ſeldom. The Eſtabliſhment of St. *Cyr* is greatly talked of. I beg you may form the Plan of it. You know very well what my Thoughts concerning it are, but I beg you may do nothing merely to comply with them. Let not your Plan be an imaginary Scheme, or a mere Sketch. Muſt the Miſtreſſes be Nuns? Will the Rules to which Nuns are bound, admit of thoſe Duties which the Education of Youth requires, without

out any Alteration in the divine Office and ſpiritual Retreats? Shall our Miſtreſſes be bound to a conſtant Confinement? Shall we have Lay Siſters or Servants? Will one Chaplain be enough? At what Age ſhall we reſtore the young Ladies to their Friends? If abſolute Vows are not approved of, will ſimple ones be ſufficient? How many Nuns will be wanting for St. *Cyr?* How many for *Verſailles?* What Difference will there be between the two Houſes? What Kind of Rule will beſt ſuit one of them? What the other? How could we have the Convent of *Verſailles* under the Archbiſhop of *Paris*, and that of St. *Cyr* under the Biſhop of *Charters*? Would it not be better to form two Plans, one for Nuns, the other for young Ladies? Execute this Taſk without any View to your own Intereſt, but, at the ſame Time, without forgetting your Talents. Adieu, my Deareſt; it is this that takes up all my Thoughts, and it probably very well deſerves them. You are too happy in ſerving God from Morning to Night. The Abbé *Gobelin* is better. We want him cruelly. I am ſhy of others. Madame is going to *Veſpers*, and Madame *de Monteſpan* will, I believe, follow her. I had a Mind to go there too, but am tired with their Converſation. What a Misfortune it is to

be

be kept from a Place I have ſo many Reaſons to love? My Complaints are few; but when one is on the Stage, every Thing is known and exaggerated. I offer every Thing that depends on me. But conſider that we muſt neither fire the King, nor deceive him.

LETTER XXXIX.

To the ſame.

1686.

I No longer know, my Deareſt, whereabout I am. They ſtill give out that the King is in a very fair Way, and yet give us Reaſon to fear he muſt undergo another Inciſion. I feel the Pain every Time I think of it, and theſe Gentlemen have been ſo kind as to prepare us againſt it from *Saturday* laſt, and now put it off for four or five Days. Here are then four or five Days more for me to be hacked and ſlaſhed to Pieces. I ſhall not be eaſy, till he is out of their Hands. I have got a Cold, which ſcarce allows me to ſpeak. I ſhould not trouble myſelf about it, if my Mind was at reſt. Our worthy Curate, (*of Verſailles*) whom you love ſo much, is dying. He will ſcarce hold out till Noon. The King is quite taken up with

St.

St. Cyr, and has altered the Choir, and ſeveral other Places. The young Ladies will be diſpoſed there by Claſſes upon four Forms, as at *Noizy*. There muſt be another Alteration in the Colour of their Dreſs. Yeſterday he conferred on the Foundation with the Controller-General. Every Thing will be ſoon ſettled. The Phyſicians are juſt going out of my Apartment, and aſſure me the King is this Morning in as good a Way as they could wiſh. Oh! Could they but ſpare him this other Inciſion!

LETTER XL.

To the ſame.

YOU are not to have your Book of Conſtitutions to Day. Meſſieurs *Racine* and *Deſpreaux* are reading and admiring them. They are retrenching the Faults of Stile, while their Tranſcribers ſell them with thoſe of Orthography. You receive Advice like an Angel: Would to God I could give it like one. No more Time is to be loſt in what concerns *St. Cyr*. The Prince is ill. The Duke ſet out Yeſterday to bring him a Confeſſor. The King has ſuffered much, and ſtill continues to ſuffer. I would have Mademoiſelle *d'Aubigny* accuſtom herſelf to every Thing. Pay Madame *de St-Pierre*

Pierre what ſhe has laid out for the King. I believe it would not be amiſs to give our Girls long trailing Gowns and white Veils at their firſt Communion. Monſieur *de Louvois* will go To-morrow to *St. Cyr*. Acquaint him with all your Wants. He only deſires to remedy them. But remember the Promiſe you made me, of not aſking for the Future a Farthing extraordinary from the King.

LETTER XLI.

To the ſame.

THE King ſuffered this Morning for ſeven Hours together, as if he had been on the Wheel. I tremble leaſt his Pains ſhould return again To-morrow. Let us put off for eight Days what we had reſolved upon. The Prince wrote on his Death-Bed a Letter to the King, which would charm you. Theſe are ſad Times. My Heart is ready to burſt.

LETTER

LETTER XLII.

To Madame du Peron*.

October 25, 1686.

I AM convinced of your Zeal and Capacity: Employ them both for the Service of our dear Houſe. True it is, that I am extremely ſenſible to every thing that concerns it; and I even believe myſelf ſometimes to be guilty of Impatience. But methinks there is ſome Reaſon for being a little in haſte, and for endeavouring to make the moſt of the preſent favourable Opportunity. God knows that I never dreamed of making an Eſtabliſhment of ſo much Conſequence; and that I had nothing more in view than to ſpend my Days in ſome Works of Charity. I neither thought myſelf obliged to effect conſiderable Things, nor deſtined to form great Deſigns. I imagined there were already but too many religious Houſes. The ſmaller my Share in this Charity, the more ſenſible am I that it is the Work of God: It is

* A Lady taken from an old Convent, to form the Ladies of St. *Cyr*, now St. *Lewis*, to the Duties of a religious Life. See in Madame de *Maintenon*'s Memoirs, an Account of this excellent Eſtabliſhment.

his, and his only, and the greater therefore is my Affection for it, It is the Work of his Hands, for he inſpired the King with the Thoughts of this Foundation. The King, I ſay, tho' an Enemy to all new Eſtabliſhments; and at what time! after a long War, which had drained his Coffers, and when ſurrounded by Miniſters, who would have confirmed him in his Diſguſt, had he heſitated a ſingle Moment. It is true, that as much as I ſhould have trembled under the Weight of governing St. *Cyr*, had it been my Work, juſt ſo bold was I, when I perceived the Finger of the Aimighty in it; and thought that it was himſelf that had laid the Burthen of it upon me. I can therefore ſay, with the greateſt Truth, that I look upon it as a Means afforded me by the Almighty, to work my Salvation; and that I ſhall always be ready to ſacrifice my Life to make it ſubſervient to his Glory. I wiſh every thing could be well ſettled before Madame *de Brinon*'s Death, before mine, before Abbé *Gobelin*'s, that the Spirit of the Inſtitution may ſubſiſt for ever, and triumph over the Oppoſitions which I can foreſee, without the Gift of any extraordinary Penetration. For can you ever expect an Abbeſs more capable or more abſolute than Madame *de Brinon*, a more zealous Friend than I am, a Director ſo penetrated with our Maxims as the Abbé *Gobelin*?

Let

Let us improve the happy, but rapid Moments, during which we have all the ſpiritual and temporal Authority in our own Hands. The King and the Biſhop are ready to do us all the Services we can deſire. 'Tis our Buſineſs to diſpoſe Things in that perfect Order, in which we would have them ever afterwards continue. One of the greateſt Obſtacles to our Undertaking, is Madame *de Brinon*'s Readineſs to receive bad Subjects. You ought all of you to be very reſolute on this Head; to raiſe yourſelves above Fear or Hope. You will be accountable to God for your Behaviour, and it is one of the moſt important Actions of your Lives.

In examining your Nuns, let your chief Attention be to inſpire them with ſolid Piety, an upright Spirit, a Taſte for their Inſtitute, a Deſire of becoming expert in the Duties of it, an Attachment to their Rules, a Spirit of Sociableneſs, a Diſlike to the World. Theſe are the principal Qualifications for a Lady of *St. Lewis*: As to a too haſty Diſpoſition, believe me that we all have the Virtues and Vices peculiar to our reſpective Conſtitutions: Thoſe that are haſty, are alſo active, vigilant, zealous for Succeſs; whilſt that which renders them mild, renders them indolent, luke warm, lazy, indifferent to every

every Thing, ſlow, inſenſible. 'Tis Piety that rectifies our Paſſions. Who can be more haſty than Madame *de Brinon* and myſelf? Do you love us the leſs for it? Thoſe who obey, you may have Reaſon to tell me, ſuffer by the Tempers of thoſe who command. I anſwer, we *muſt* ſuffer, and to ſuffer is our Buſineſs in this World. After all; you are to have for the future no Superiors but of your own chuſing. Though I plead for the Haſty, and perhaps through a Motive of Self-Love, I adviſe you to correct as much as you can this Imperfection in all your Nuns. They muſt bear with it in others, and be exempt from it themſelves.

There is no Room to heſitate about forming a Chapter for the *Poſtulants* *, and trying their Vocation by proper Mortifications. We have ſo thoroughly cleared our Inſtitution, from all the uſual Practices of Convents; that if we did not take up again ſome of their Maxims, we ſhould in the End form only a private Houſe, which would ſoon fall to Decay. Conſer occaſionally with your Abbeſs, and loſe no Time in forming this Chapter. Act in Conjunction with her. She has a great Stock of Senſe and Vir-

* Perſons who deſire to be received as Novices into a religious Houſe.

tue,

tue, and muſt endeavour to impart it to all thoſe who live under your Government. Adieu, my deareſt Daughter.

LETTER XLIII.

To Madame de Brinon.

December 25, 1686.

THE King aſſiſted at Part of Matins; heard three Maſſes; was preſent at high Maſs; afterwards paid *Madame* a Viſit of an Hour. He was likewiſe at the Dauphineſs's; from thence went to *Sermon*, and aſſiſted at Veſpers, muſically performed. They ſcarcely lay any *Dreſſings* on him. Every one is overjoyed at his happy Recovery. Father *Bourdaloue* preached an incomparable Sermon: Towards the Concluſion he particularly addreſſed his Majeſty; he ſpoke to him of his Health, of the Love of his Subjects, of the Apprehenſions of his Court. He melted his Audience into Tears, and ſhed ſome himſelf. It was his *Heart* that ſpoke, and it indeed ſpoke to every Heart. You will underſtand what I mean. Madame is very well. I am never tired of beholding the Joy that appears in her Countenance for the King's Recovery. The Neighbourhood of *Verſailles* will procure you a thouſand Advantages, and ſubject

you to a thouſand Reſtraints. But can we expect all Bleſſings at once? I thank you for your many Marks of Friendſhip on this Occaſion. I never had, nor ever ſhall have, ſuch another Trial. Good Night, my deareſt. You may now aſk me what Queſtions you pleaſe; I am in a Condition to anſwer them.

LETTER XLIV.

To the ſame.

I AM confined to my Bed by a violent Headach; but it cannot hinder me, my Deareſt, from thanking you for your Letter of Conſolation. The King goes abroad every Day: He no longer feels any Pain. But theſe Gentlemen anſwer ſo little for his being perfectly cured, that I can foreſee a Journey to *Barege*. Gueſs at my Affliction. Monſieur *Fagon* has juſt left my Chamber. He ſays the King is in perfect Health. Let us not put our Confidence in Men; they neither know what they ſay, nor what they do.

LETTER XLV.

To the same.

THERE is no End of the King's Complaint. His Physicians and Surgeons kill me every Moment. One Day they find him well; the next they change Colour, when they look at each other. This Morning Mr. *Fagon* pierced me to the Heart, and, in a Moment afterwards, assured me the King was in a fair Way. In the Evening, perhaps, it will be another Story; and I may reckon upon a very uneasy Night. I am not Mistress of my Sensibility. You must not mention a Tittle of what I write you. Adieu, my Dearest. Continue to pray for the King's Recovery.

LETTER XLVI.

To Madame du Perou.

October 11, 1689.

YOU must long be confined to the Infirmary, before I suspect you of remaining there through any Liking to it. Your Letter gives me great Pleasure: I see by it with what Zeal and Assiduity you apply yourself to the Duties

of your Station: It is a very important and a difficult one. God will aſſiſt you, as long as you continue to act with a good Intention, and humbly conſult all thoſe who can give you good Advice. I ſhall let you know at *St. Cyr* what paſſed between Madame *d'Arcy* and me. You'll ſee I began to try her Vocation pretty rudely. Conſult, however, Abbé *Briſacier*, and act in Conjunction with your Abbeſs. Madame *de Fontaines* has wrote me Wonders of your Noviciate. Torment Siſter *Montalembert* * well, and more than any other of your Novices, for my Sake. It concerns us greatly not to receive any but excellent Subjects; and in chuſing them we ought to have nothing in View, but the Advantage of our dear Houſe, which will improve from Day to Day. You may greatly contribute to it by your Care of the Novices, and your good Example.

'Tis impoſſible for you to ſeparate your religious Conſtitutions, from thoſe which concern the Education of the young Ladies. 'Tis ſaid in every Page, that the Eſtabliſhment was made for them. You have been added to it, merely to ſerve them as Mothers and Miſtreſſes, and have been obliged to make Vows, merely to fix

* A near Relation of Madame *de Maintenon*.

your

your Tenderneſs and Zeal for them. I ſhall be very glad to receive a Letter from the Novices. Let every one ſay ſomething, but without any Aſſiſtance from the reſt. I begin to tremble for my Prophecy. The Prince of *Orange* continues in good Health.

LETTER XLVII.

To Madame de Fontaines *.

September 2, 1690.

BLESS'D be God a thouſand Times, Madam, for the Favours he has conferred on you! He intends you for himſelf. He never ceaſes to call you. He gives you the requiſite Diſpoſitions to anſwer his Invitations. Your Letter, though full of Anxiety and Trouble, gave me the greateſt Pleaſure. Humility and Obedience will ſoon make your Mind eaſy. I cannot ſee you ſo ſenſible of your Wants, ſo ready to own them, to aſk Aſſiſtance, to ſeek it with Confidence and Reſpect at the Seat of the Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, without hoping every Thing for you. Acknowledge, therefore, the Miracle he actually operates in you. The Change is ſlow, becauſe God requires you ſhould

* One of the Ladies of *St. Lewis*.

work in Conjunction with him; but, in ſhort, it is a real Change. Theſe three Days paſt you were in Pain about writing to Monſieur *B.* and this Day you write to me with more Energy, more Submiſſion, and more Humility, than you ever wrote to him. Courage, my dear Daughter; be no longer uneaſy about your Complaints. I look upon you as a Perſon who ſuffers, and whoſe Friends pity the Sufferings, without being alarmed at them. There is no Danger for the Sick, who abandon themſelves entirely to God, and ſubmit to the Conduct of thoſe, whom he has entruſted with his Graces and his Power. The more uneaſy and diſturbed you are, while you truſt entirely to yourſelf, the calmer and eaſier will you be after renouncing your own weak Underſtanding and your Will. You will approach the Sacraments, or keep at a Diſtance from them, through a Principle of Obedience; and you will no longer judge for yourſelf of the Diſpoſitions you may be in. You will be ſtrong and faithful to reſiſt Temptations. God will give a Bleſſing to every Thing you do, and you will viſibly perceive it. O the Goodneſs of God, in thus forcing you to have Recourſe to him, and in not permitting you to be entirely diſcouraged. He gives you, you ſay, a very ſenſible Foretaſte of the Happineſs there is in ſerving him. 'Tis

becauſe

becauſe he requires you ſhould ſerve him; but he likewiſe requires you ſhould ſacrifice to him every Thing you hold deareſt, your Underſtanding, your Will, your Liberty. There is nothing elſe in us worthy to be offered to him. Let us give him all, Madam. Let us ſerve him together; and let us never forget his Mercies. Rejoice as a ſick Perſon aſſured of Recovery. You will for the future be dearer to me than ever.

LETTER XLVIII.

To Madame de Maiſonfort.

December 12, 1690.

I HAVE not acquainted you with all my Joy; but I know that you do not doubt of it. I thank God from the Bottom of my Heart for what he has done for you and for us all. You will now find Peace. You are at the Bottom of that Abyſs †, where we begin to find a ſure Footing. You know from whom I borrow this Phraſe *. I ſhall ſee him To-morrow, and will aſk him for your Retreat every Thing mentioned by the Biſhop of *Chartres*. Give up

† By having conſecrated herſelf to God in the Convent of *St. Cyr*.

* *Fenelon*.

yourſelf, my Deareſt, entirely to God. Permit yourſelf to be led in all Things by thoſe, whoſe Buſineſs it is to conduct you. How happy are you to have it in your Power to make him a Sacrifice of all you have! Were it lawful to envy ſuch Favours, I ſhould ſcarce conſider your's without ſome Uneaſineſs. Never forget me in your Prayers. I ſpoke to the Biſhop of *Chartres* about your Brother, and we will remember his Siſter. Abandon yourſelf entirely to God, to whom you have given yourſelf. Prepare yourſelf well to receive him, and let me find that all Things go well.

LETTER XLIX.

To the ſame.

1691.

RESIGN yourſelf abſolutely to God. Follow with Simplicity the Directions of Abbé *Fenelon* and the Biſhop of *Chartres*. I ſhall myſelf always ſubmit to their Opinions*. Accuſtom yourſelf to their Government. But

* For the Character of the latter who ſucceeded Abbé *Gobelin* in the Direction of Madame *de Maintenon*'s Conſcience, the Reader is referred to the *Memoirs* of this Lady.

don't

don't ſpread the Abbé's Maxims among thoſe who have no Reliſh for them. You are always ſpeaking of the moſt perfect State, and you are ſtill full of Imperfections. As to Madame *Guion*, you have ſaid too much of her. We muſt be ſatisfied to keep her to ourſelves. It becomes her as little, as it does me, to direct our Ladies. It would be expoſing herſelf to another Perſecution. She has been ſuſpected, and this alone is ſufficient to keep her in Trouble. She appeared to me a Woman of the greateſt Diſcretion. She will have no Correſpondence with any one but yourſelf. I have been extremely edified with her whole Conduct, and I ſhall always ſee her with Pleaſure. But our Houſe muſt be conducted by common and ſimple Rules. It will be a Perfection in you not to aſpire at Perfection.

LETTER L.

To the ſame.

February 2, 1692.

I CANNOT expreſs the Joy I feel, Madam, upon hearing that you have been confirmed in a Reſolution of remaining at *St. Cyr*. I could not wait till *Tueſday* to let you know it. Make your Mind eaſy then. I felt all the Pain, in

which I ſaw you for ſome Days paſt. Give yourſelf up to God and to us, with a good Grace and a great Deal of Courage, in order to labour at the ſame Time for your own Sanctification and that of others. How happy you are to be your own Miſtreſs, and to have it in your Power thus to offer, and to beſtow yourſelf. I can ſcarce refrain envying *you* ſo high a Flight, while *we* but crawl in the Service of God, and think we do a great Deal, when we don't fall into the Precipices that ſurround us. Good Night, my Deareſt. You will be for the future my Daughter, for I every Day become more and more your Mother.

LETTER LI.

To the ſame.

February 6, 1692.

YOU are appointed, my dear Daughter, to make one of the Foundation Stones of *St. Cyr*. You are, one Day, to ſupport this great Edifice by your Regularity and by your Examples. But don't be ſo haſty. Speak leſs, and, above all Things, never let Paſſion get the better of you. You ſay we muſt conſtrain ourſelves in nothing, that we muſt forget ourſelves,

ſelves, and that we muſt never have an Eye, in any Thing we do, to our own Satisfaction. Theſe Expreſſions create Uneaſineſs in the Minds of ſeveral of our Ladies. My little Experience in Things of this Nature made me find Fault with Abbé *Fenelon*'s Unwillingneſs to ſhew his Writings: He was, however, in the right. All have not a ſolid and upright Way of thinking. The Liberty of the Children of God is preached up to Perſons, who are not as yet of that Number, and who abuſe that Liberty to ſubmit to nothing. Submiſſion is our firſt Duty. Liſten, therefore, with Submiſſion to God who calls you. See if you have a Mind to miſtruſt him. Will you pretend to ſet Bounds to him. He will not admit of any with Souls, whom he has prepared with certain Graces. 'Tis by abandoning yourſelf to his Spirit, that you'll find Peace and Liberty. Either I am greatly deceived, or you conſider Piety in too ſpeculative a Light. You make it entirely to conſiſt in ſudden Motions, in Reſignations, in Self-Renunciations. But where is the Self-Renunciation of a Woman, that ſeeks to have her Mind at Liberty, and her Body at Eaſe?

LETTER

LETTER LII.

To Madame de Fontaines.

Maubenge, May 24, 1692.

I AM overjoy'd, Madam, at the Account you give me of your Retreat, and I expect a great Deal of Benefit from it. I have not opened my Lips theſe twenty-four Hours. This would be too happy a State, but it is interrupted by a little Uneaſineſs.

The King has ordered us to ſtop here To-day and To-morrow, that every one may have Time to perform their Devotions for this Feſtival. He thinks of every Thing, you ſee, for, it is from the Army that he has ſent us this Order. This is judging right, to be at once the Hero and the Chriſtian. I beg you may tell Madame *de Veilbant*, that the Siege of *Namur* is more conſiderable than that of *Mons*; that the King attacks it with forty or fifty thouſand Men; that Monſieur *de Luxembourg* has ninety thouſand more to oppoſe the Prince of *Orange*, in Caſe he ſhould attempt to raiſe the Siege; that I ſurveyed all this vaſt Multitude with my own Eyes, and that ſhe does not exceed them in Courage. We ſhall ſet out for *Philippeville*, which is but ſix or ſeven Leagues from *Namur*. The King

is in perfect Health, and the whole Army is in Raptures with his Mildneſs, his Affability, the eaſy Acceſs there is to him, and his continual Application to Buſineſs. Tell the Lady Abbeſs, that, in the Midſt of this powerful Army, he places all his Confidence in God. Tell the whole Houſe, that I ſhould have Madame *de Maiſonfort*'s Reſignation, not to be ſomewhat uneaſy at being at ſo great a Diſtance from my Children: The dear Mother of them all is in good Health.

LETTER LIII.

To Madame de Veilhant.

May, 1692.

IMAGINE to yourſelf, Madam, that Yeſterday, after having travelled ſix Hours in a pretty good Road, we diſcovered a Caſtle built upon a Rock, which appeared to be no very commodious Habitation, though we had been crained up to it. We drew nearer, however, but without finding any Road, by which we could get to it. At laſt we diſcovered in an Abyſs, or as it were in a very deep Well at the Foot of this Caſtle, the Tops of a great Number of little Houſes, which looked like ſo many Puppets, ſurrounded on every Side with Rocks of a ſtupendous

pendous Height. They are quite perpendicular. We were under a Neceſſity of deſcending into this dreadful Habitation, by a Road equally dreadful. The Coaches jolted enough to break all their Springs. The Ladies caught at every Thing they could lay hold on. We got down after a Quarter of an Hour ſpent in perpetual Terror, and fell into a Town*, conſiſting of one Street, which they call the *Great Street* though two Coaches can't go in it a-breaſt. It is quite dark, even at Noon. The Houſes are ſhocking; and Madame *de Villeneuve* would certainly have the Vapours here. Their Water is very bad, and Wine ſcarce. The Bakers have Orders to work only for the Army, and let the reſt of the World ſtarve. Every Thing is ſent to the Army. It rains as through a Sieve ſince our Arrival. As yet I have ſeen but two Churches: They are on the firſt Floor, and 'tis a particular Favour to get Admittance into them. We had an Office there, accompanied with very wretched Muſick, and ſuch a conſtant Inhalation of ill-ſcented Incence, that we could no longer ſee each other. I ſhan't ſpeak of the Naſtineſs of their Streets; but indeed the King has little to do to take ſuch Places. The Siege

* *Dinant.*

of

of *Namur* goes on very well. Our Works are very forward. As yet we have loſt but few Men. The Town will be ours in four or five Days. The Caſtle will probably hold out longer. The Prince of *Orange* gives out that he will come to the Relief of the Place; but he will come too late. The King has the Gout in both Feet; and I am not ſorry for it. A red-hot Bullet has fallen in Monſieur *de Bouflers*'s Quarters, and ſet Fire to ſeven thouſand Weight of Powder. This beautiful City ſhook at the Report, for, to compleat our Happineſs, we hear every Gun that is fired, and at every Diſcharge have Reaſon to tremble for the Life of ſome Friend. In other Reſpects I am very happy. I am well lodged, well ſerved, and in a Diſpoſition to like every Place God thinks proper to fix me in. I embrace you all, my dear Daughters. There are four hundred Steps to aſcend from this place to the fine Caſtle I was ſpeaking of.

LETTER

LETTER LIV.

To the ſame.

May, 1692.

IF with a ſafe Conſcience I might wiſh to ſee a Nun out of her Convent, I ſhould be glad to ſee you in the fortified Towns through which we paſs; and if we could change Inclinations, I would with Pleaſure aſſume that martial Diſpoſition, which makes you love Powder and Ball. You would be highly delighted, Madam, to ſmell nothing but Tobacco; hear nothing but Drums: eat nothing but Cheeſe; ſee nothing but Baſtions, Half-Moons, Counterſcarps; and touch nothing, the Coarſeneſs of which is not quite oppoſite to that Senſuality, above which you have raiſed yourſelf ſo high, by your Temper and Courage. For my Part, who unfortunately am a Woman, and more ſo than any of my Sex, I would readily give you up my Place, to work at *Tapiſtry* with our dear Ladies. I hope this Pleaſure is only deferred, and that *Namur* will chuſe to ſurrender, rather than be reduced to a Heap of Rubbiſh. You think of nothing but the War: Not a Word of the Retreat, nor of your Health. I am too

good

good to you, considering your Silence, in telling you, that the King is very well in spite of his Gout; and that from his Bed, to which he has been confined these twelve Days past, he gives his Orders for the speedy Reduction of *Namur*; that his other Army may make head against the Prince of *Orange*; that Maréchal *de Lorges* may penetrate into *Germany*; that Monsieur *de Catinat* may drive back the Duke of *Savoy*; that Monsieur *de Noailles* may hinder the *Spaniards* from undertaking any Thing; that Monsieur *de Tourville* may beat the Enemy's Fleet, if the Wind favours him; and that the interior Provinces, governed as if the King was there present, may suffer nothing by the War. I must take my Leave of you after this Picture, which comprehends, I believe, every Thing you require.

LETTER LV.

To Mademoiselle d'Aubigny.

Chantilli, May 11, 1693.

I LOVE you too well, my dear Niece, not to tell you of your Faults. I am ever acquainting the young Ladies of *St. Cyr* with theirs: And how could I forget you, whom I consider as my own Daughter? I don't know whether

whether it is you that inſpires them with Haughtineſs, or they who give you that, which every Body admires in you. Be that as it may, there will be no bearing with you, if you don't humble a little. That Air of Authority you aſſume, by no Means becomes you. Do you look upon yourſelf as a Perſon of Importance, becauſe you are brought up in a Houſe, that the King viſits every Day? The Day after his Death, neither his Succeſſor, nor any of thoſe, who are now ſo fond of you, will give themſelves any Trouble about you, or *St. Cyr?* If the King happens to die before you are married, you muſt take up with a Country Gentleman of ſmall Fortune and great Pride. If during *my* Life you marry a Lord, he will eſteem you when I am gone, in Proportion as you pleaſe him: You can only pleaſe him by a mild Diſpoſition, and you have not any belonging to you. Your Governeſs indulges you too much. I am not prejudiced againſt you. I love you too well; but I can perceive in you abominable Pride. You know the Goſpel by Heart, but of what avail, if you conduct yourſelf contrary to its Maxims? Conſider that 'tis entirely to your Aunt's good Fortune, that your Father is indebted for his, and from which you muſt expect your's; and laugh at the Reſpect that is ſhewn to you. You can't bear that your Dear ſhould

tell

tell you it is on our Account. You would raiſe yourſelf even above me. Don't deceive yourſelf. I am but little; you are nothing. I ſuffered a great Deal the other Day by your Behaviour to Madame *de Caylus*. I ſpeak to you, as if you were a grown-up Girl, becauſe you have the Senſe of one: I would be very well ſatisfied you had leſs, provided you could get rid of that Preſumption, which is ridiculous before Men, and criminal before God. Let me find you at my Return modeſt, mild, ſhy, docile. I ſhall love you the better for it. You know how much I hate to chide you, and what Pleaſure I take in giving *you* any.

LETTER LVI.

To Madame de *.

September 30, 1693.

I HEAR much of a Letter that I am to receive from the Community, but ſee nothing of it. It would give me the greateſt Pleaſure, if we had nothing to do but to labour, for our Sanctification, and the perfect Eſtabliſhment of our dear Houſe, for which I conſtantly fluctuate between Fear and Hope. I am ſo perſuaded that nothing leſs than Perfection will anſwer,

as

as I have told you a hundred Times over, that I muſt own the total Deſtruction of it would give me no great Uneaſineſs, as we are not obliged to ſupport an Eſtabliſhment that ſurpaſſes our Strength. But were this Eſtabliſhment to take a wrong Turn, it would be the Place in the World, where God would be moſt offended. Theſe Reflexions, my dear Siſter, cannot but alarm us; yet that is not my Intention. You judge right, when you ſay, we ſhall ſuſtain a great Loſs the Day our Mother * will leave us. It is a Loſs that can't be avoided, and I therefore tremble at the Thoughts of it. As for your Part, you muſt have more Courage, and take Advantage of every Thing you ſee. You will probably be one of the principal Ladies of our Houſe, and you know there are ſcarce any Poſts, in which 'tis not neceſſary to command. Learn therefore the Method of commanding with Mildneſs and Steadineſs, and of anſwering in a few Words, without raiſing the Voice, or loſing that Modeſty and Gravity, with which our Mother accompanies all her Words and Actions. Write down whatever you may think proper to be committed to Writing, and that you may

* Mother *Priolo*, who came from *Chaillot*, to form the Noviciate of *St. Cyr*.

be

be afraid of forgetting. You can't pray God too earneſtly to enlighten us all, nor liſten too attentively to his Inſpirations, to be able to comply with every Thing that may be expected from you. I thought I could perceive that Sadneſs you mention. Take Courage. God will not forſake you, if you but give yourſelf up entirely to him. Ceaſe not to beſeech him to proſper, or to overthrow our Undertaking. Adieu, my dear Daughter.

LETTER LVII.

To the Ladies of St. Lewis.

Fontainebleau, October 1, 1693.

NOTHING but a general Peace could afford me greater Joy, than what I feel on ſeeing you ſatisfied with the Life you are about to embrace. God is my Witneſs that I never intended to make it painful, and that I would be heartily willing to alter your Conſtitutions and Rules, contrary to my own Notions, if thoſe we conſult thought well of it. But we muſt at laſt fix to ſomething, and hope, that as we had alone in View the Glory of God, he will be pleaſed to give to our Endeavours a Bleſſing. A modern Author, well known at *St. Cyr* *, has often

* Abbé *Fenelon*.

often told us, that too anxious Conſiderations of our own Weakneſs are apt to retard our Progreſs in the Road to Perfection; and that we ought to proceed on with Faith and Confidence, without looking behind us. I exhort you, my dear Daughters, to follow this Maxim. Let us think no longer of paſt Troubles. Let us forgive the Uneaſineſs we have given each other, and let us think of nothing but of entering courageouſly upon the Truſt repoſed in us. You ſee what is required of you by your Conſtitutions, by your Rules, and even by the Names of your ſeveral Employments. It muſt be our Care to lay no new Burthen upon you; it muſt be yours to complain no longer of the Hardſhips of a Life, which you have voluntarily embraced. Uſe every Endeavour to make your Burthen light; but at the ſame Time endeavour to lighten that of your Superior, by an unreſerved Obedience. I often pray that God may give you the Grace of conſidering him in the Perſon that is to govern your Houſe. You have, theſe Ten Months paſt, paid the exacteſt Obedience to the Lady named to govern you. Her Virtue, her good Senſe, her Experience, have inſpired you with the moſt favourable Sentiments for her. Many of you have declared, that they would obey her with Pleaſure all their Lives.

Lives. I hope your Obedience is not limited to an Opportunity of exerting it that cannot be expected; and that you will be equally ready to yield it to one of your own Community. She will not have as much Experience as our dear Mother, but then you will all endeavour to perform your ſeveral Duties in ſuch a manner as to leave her Time to learn her own. We will labour together, my dear Daughters; I will ſacrifice my Life, and ſacrifice it with Pleaſure to our Undertaking, provided I ſee you act with Courage, Zeal, and Confidence in God,—in bringing up in his Service the little People he has committed to your Care. I long mightily to be back with you. I moſt tenderly love you.

LETTER LVIII.

To Madame de R . . . .

In the Name of our Lord J. C.

From our Houſe of *St. Lewis*,
October 11, 1693.

THIS is to teach you to date; moſt Women date very ill. Our Mothers don't behave with the Simplicity peculiar to *St. Francis de Sales*'s Daughters, in thoſe things that concern them. Don't obey them on theſe Occaſions, and throw the Fault upon *Nanny*. Is not this an

Advice

Advice worthy of a Foundreſs? The Thought of making a lame Sifter Portreſs is very extravagant. You know whoſe it is. Don't amuſe yourſelf ſo much in regretting our dear Mothers (of *St. Mary de Chaillot*) as in benefitting by what they ſay, and what they do. You can't be too earneſt in beſeeching the Almighty to inſpire all thoſe who govern your Houſe. My Joy will be complete, when I ſee you good Oeconomiſts; poor in Spirit; and ſparing, in order to give away, as Miſers are in order to hoard up. 'Tis this Spirit that I wiſh my dear Daughters.

The Satisfaction you tell me the Ladies expreſs at the Mitigations I have granted them, gives me great Pleaſure. There's nothing I would not do to pleaſe them, provided it did not interfere with the Order of the Houſe. I was ever aware, how diſagreeable it muſt be to ſleep in the Dormitories of the young Ladies, and I look upon this Duty to be ſo great an Auſterity, that I ſhould be glad there was ſcarce any other to be practiſed in our Houſe. I am highly pleaſed with the Reſolution you have taken, never to conſent to the repeating of any of the Practices eſtabliſhed among us, by our Mothers. 'Tis lawful for you, at any Time before you take your Vows, to repreſent what Alterations you think ſhould be made; but that Term once expired,

pired, you muſt remain firm, and ſuffer no innovation, though it were for the better. Tremble not at the Sight of what you have to go through: I never required any thing from you but Good will. If your Intentions are upright, and aim only at the Service of God, he himſelf will infallibly form you, inſtruct you in your Duties, and fit you for the Accompliſhment of his Deſigns. Why do you make Apologies for ſpeaking to me *naturally*. 'Tis what I always required from every one of you, and what I always expected from you in particular. Frankneſs is neceſſary in every Condition; but if it is a Virtue in the World, 'tis a Duty in Convents. You tell me your Mind freely concerning the religious Habit; and I am obliged to you for your Declaration of this Weakneſs, ſince God ſtill permits you to have it. There is nothing as yet determined in regard to that Point. Madame *de Montfort* would not heſitate on the Occaſion, if ſhe belonged to your Council. She ſays, that the religious Habit humbles the Heart, and that Perſons who have taken it, dare not afterwards hold up their Heads.

LETTER LIX.

To Madame de Fontaines.

January 12, 1694.

THE Confidence you have repoſed in me, gives me great Pleaſure. Your Biſhop can't ſay you have impoſed upon him, and certainly you have not ſoftened your Imperfections. God be praiſed for all he has operated in you. Proceed couragiouſly in the Road to Perfection, for your own Sake, and that of the Community he has committed to your Care. Be perſuaded that your principal Obligation conſiſts in edifying and conducting it; and that your Practices of Mortification, of Reſignation, and Self-renunciation, ought to tend more particularly to the better Government of your Children; that 'tis your Buſineſs to enlighten them, to open their Hearts, to comfort them, to divert them, to preſent them; in fine, that the Diſcharge of theſe Duties ſhould be your conſtant Employment. Seldom trouble yourſelf about ſuch Things as can be done by others, that you may the better perform what can be done only by yourſelf. Study how you may procure yourſelf Aſſiſtance; you will after all have more to do than any one elſe. I am afraid of your

Courage,

Courage, of your Activity, of your Cruelty to yourſelf; or to expreſs it more properly, I am afraid theſe Qualities make you enter into Particulars which waſte your Time and your Strength. Don't be in too much Haſte to be acquainted with the Government of the temporal Concerns of your Houſe. Go on Step by Step. Your firſt Attention ſhould be to form your Ladies to preſerve the Regularity which now ſubſiſts amongſt them, and to gain their Affection, without purchaſing it by the ſmalleſt Relaxation; I mean, in your Rules. If I give you good Advice, I conjure you to make good Uſe of it. If my Advice is not wanting, throw my Letter into the Fire.

LETTER LX.

To the ſame.

Verſailles, March 12, 1694.

I AM very well ſatisfied, my dear Mother, with the Account you give of our Houſe. Our Daughters muſt never repine at being admoniſhed, chid, excited; the only Way of maintaining Regularity. Whatever Perfection they may aim, or arrive, at there will be ſtill little Faults, and if they are not immediately taken Notice of, thoſe who commit them would

fall into greater as insensibly; which the Spirit of the Institue points out. Let not therefore our Daughters consider your chiding them, as Proofs of their giving little Satisfaction, but as the Consequence of their having formed to themselves Notions of a State of Perfection impossible to be attained. Such Thoughts would only serve to grieve and dishearten them. We don't want to lay any new Burthen upon them; but 'tis their Desire, as much as ours, to see that Regularity established, which consists in punctual Obedience to the Rules. For this Purpose no Relaxation is to be winked at.

The Curate of *Versailles* told me, at setting out for *Forges*, that he would not be back time enough to preach before you on *St. Candida*'s Day. I could wish, if it was agreeable to your Bishop, that you did not make it a Rule, or a Custom, to have Sermons, at all Events, on certain Days. You would thereby avoid an Inconveniency that most Convents labour under of having Sermons often, which they would do better without. I would be glad to have Preachers we could depend upon, Men approved by your Bishop. I would watch the Conveniency of such, and hear them on a working Day, if they could not preach on a Holy Day. I would prefer the Eve of the Festival, to be the better instructed

ſtructed and prepared to celebrate it. But I would be better pleaſed that my dear Daughters ſhould hear no Sermon on *Eaſter-Sunday*, than that they ſhould be obliged to liſten to all the young Cordeliers, that would come to make a Trial of their Skill before them. Add to this the Trouble of inviting them, of thanking them, and what is ſtill worſe, the Danger of their Doctrine not being in every reſpect what it ought to be, at a Seaſon like this, and a Seaſon which will laſt as long as the World, in which we walk in the midſt of Precipices. I believe the Biſhop of *Chartres* will not find Fault with what I ſay; and if he ſhould, you know, whether I am willing to ſubmit, and deſire that you ſhould do ſo likewiſe. I muſt own it gives me Concern to ſee Girls leave us, who diſcover a Vocation to our Eſtabliſhment, and a great deal of Piety, and Sweetneſs of Temper. Such Perſons are of great Service in a Houſe. I believe you will have *Vellaine*, *Jaucour*, and *Vandam*: They have a great Stock of good Senſe: However all muſt not be *Head* in the Body; there muſt be Feet and Arms; but they muſt be ſound Members.

Rejoice to ſee yourſelf loved, eſteemed, reſpected, for the Sake of God, and renounce Self-love, which would make you conſider theſe

Sentiments as terminating in yourſelf. When I ſee our dear Daughters act thro' a Spirit of Faith, I conceive great Hopes of their eſtabliſhing themſelves upon a ſolid Foundation. Good-will is oftener wanting than Power. I am come nearer to you with great Pleaſure, though I cannot bear the Sight of that Miſery I believe I ſhall meet with, as the Price of Corn, we are told, daily increaſes.

LETTER LXI.

To the ſame.

1695.

WE have One ſick here, whoſe Life is uſeful to the Publick. 'Tis Monſieur *de Luxembourg*. Pray for him, I beſeech you. Conduct my Siſter *Prevot* in ſuch a manner, that ſhe may loſe nothing of her former Humility and Simplicity. I imagine it won't be proper to ſay much to her of what has happened. My Siſter *Mary Conſtance* knows more of it than me. Don't make yourſelf too cheap: Remember your Character of Mother, of eldeſt Siſter, of Nun. Under Pretence of forming our Girls, make not Rhetoricians of them. Do not inſpire them with a Taſte for Converſation. They would grow weary of their Lives when confined

to

to their own Families. Let them love Silence. It becomes our Sex. Don't fix your Heart upon any thing. I would not afflict you, by informing you that we muſt ſoon loſe that beloved Miſtreſs. However, I would excite you to loſe no Time in making yourſelf perfect, by telling you, that you are not to poſſeſs her long. Aſſiſt me in this Perplexity, by not weeping for her before her Departure, and by applying yourſelf more diligently than ever to profit by her Inſtruction and her Example.

The more regular your Community is, the more it ſtands in need of innocent Pleaſures, to return to its Duties with new Courage. Oh! that I could but let all religious Women ſee the Bottom of my Heart, and the real Nature of my Condition! They would then ſee the Happineſs of their Vocation. The World is a Lyar. It promiſes us Pleaſure, and gives nothing but Pain. And I know better than any one elſe, that this Pain is in Proportion to every one's Rank and Fortune, and that the greateſt are the moſt unhappy.

I have made ſome Reflexions on the New Year's Gifts, which *Bernard* intends to make you. I am afraid of having been too ſevere upon that Head. I never gained a Suit: I was

always caſt. But methinks the Example of *Chaillot* would be better for you than mine.

I knew a Lady, who ruined herſelf by buying every thing ſhe could get a Bargain of. 'Tis my Caſe in regard to giving Charity, and I can never deny moderate Requeſts. Give your Philoſopher therefore Five *Louis*, and be in no Pain to make the like Propoſals, as often as Providence furniſhes you with an Occaſion.

LETTER LXII.

To the ſame.

I HAVE ſent you plenty of Sugar-plums. 'Tis to comfort my Children for the Loſs of their Mother *.

The King is very well ſatisfied with the Viſit he made you Yeſterday. He is a little indiſpoſed To-day with the Phyſick he took, which ſtill operates upon him: I hope it will do him the more good. I am of your Opinion, my dear Daughter, that a King is a great Preacher, and a very perſuaſive one. He gave you very good Maxims: *To give one's Opinion, and then ſubmit, to uphold Regulations made contrary to one's Advice, to forſake every thing in order never to for-*

* Madame *Priolo*.

ſake

ſake the young Ladies. This is what I remember; but I reckon that Madame *de Bouju* has not loſt a Syllable of it. I was not ſorry I could not take my Leave of our dear Daughters. I ſhould not have been able to have contained myſelf. May every one of you continue your Progreſs in the Road of Perfection, to which I know you all aſpire! May all together form one holy Community! May they live like Angels! May they think of nothing ſo much as dying to themſelves! May they be humble, ſilent, zealous for the Succeſs of their Eſtabliſhment! May they love to mortify themſelves, and may their Study be to afford themſelves innocent Amuſement! May they become ſimple! May their Recreations be cheerful. May they avoid particular Connexions, which are the Source of all manner of Troubles! May they love their Superiors, who love them ſo tenderly! But, after having wiſhed them ſo many Bleſſings, I beſeech them to aſk of God for me, the Graces they think I ſtand in need of; and of which they can form a much better Judgment than myſelf. It is not enough to exhort our Daughters to Perfection, we ought to lay before them ſuitable Examples. Here is one which I have found in an Author, whom they neither ſuſpect nor diſlike.

Extract of a Letter from Cambray.

" TO conclude, Madam, you have a great " Community of Nuns to govern, and 'tis " your Intereſt to have before you Models of " Perfection. I ſhall therefore give one, for " that regular Diſcipline, which I propoſe to " you. 'Tis an immemorial Cuſtom of every " Nun belonging to the noble Abbeys of this " Country, to ſpend in each Year a Month in " her Family, and to viſit her Relations. 'Tis " an indiſpenſable Mark of Reſpect. When I " arrive at a Convent, the Abbeſs comes out " even into the Street to receive me: All " Strangers are received in Parlours, without " the Houſe, that have neither Grates nor " Cloiſter. As to me, I am, on my Arrival, " conducted, with all my Company, to the " Church, the Choir, the Dormitory, and at " laſt to the Refectory *. The Abbeſs then " preſents me with a Glaſs. We drink toge- " ther, to each other's Health. The reſt of the " Nuns attack me likewiſe: My Vicar general " and my Clergy come to my Aſſiſtance. All " this paſſes with a Simplicity which would de- " light you. In Spite of this coarſe Freedom,

* Place where they eat in Religious Houſes.

" theſe

" theſe good Nuns live in the moſt amiable In-
" nocence. They ſeldom receive any Viſits
" but from their Relations. Their Parlours
" are mere Deſerts, the World quite unknown
" to them; and there reigns among them a
" moſt edifying Ruſticity. They are here as
" great Strangers to Refinements in Piety, as in
" other Matters. Their Virtue is coarſe, like
" their Enterior, but the Soil, which produces
" it, is excellent. With this *Flemmiſh* Medio-
" crity, People are neither ſo good nor ſo bad
" as in *France*. Neither Vice nor Virtue are
" puſhed to ſuch Lengths: But the generality
" of the religious Men and Women are more
" upright, and more innocent."

You may well imagine, my dear Mother, after reading this Letter, that I wiſh greatly you reſembled the Pattern there propoſed; and that my Joy would be at its Height, could I but ſee you drink with my Lord Biſhop of *Chartres*, and Siſter *Veilhant* attack his Vicar general. You muſt think I have a great deal of Leiſure to write you ſo long a Letter; but when *St. Cyr* is the Subject, 'tis always *Sunday* with me. The King is diſcourſing with a Hero, Maréchal *Bouſflers*, who is inconſolable for the Loſs of *Namur*. Adieu, my dear Daughter.

LETTER

LETTER LXIII.

To Madame de la Lande *.

YOU are now, my dear Child, in your own Houſe. I pray God to bleſs it; and I make no Doubt but he will. Avoid the World. Live retired. Study to pleaſe your Huſband; endeavour after pleaſing none but him †. Let your chief Pleaſure be to viſit *St. Cyr* and me. Love Work. We are all born to it, and not a ſingle Moment of our Lives is properly our own. Pray for me. Your Heart is pure; your Prayers will be heard. You know better than any one elſe my Imperfections and Failings. I can't go to you, nor can you come to me; and yet you have a Mind to ſee me, and I am willing you ſhould. I therefore ſend you my Chamber ‡. I know it once uſed to amuſe you.

* A young Lady educated at *St. Cyr*, and a great Favourite of Madame *de Maintenon*'s.

† Madame *de Lande* was exceſſively handſome.

‡ A Fan, on which Madame *de Maintenon*'s Apartment is very naturally repreſented. The King appears employed at his Deſk: Madame *de Maintenon* ſpinning. The Dutcheſs of *Burgundy* at play: Mademoiſelle *d'Aubigny*, Niece to Madame *de Maintenon*, at her Collation.

LETTER

LETTER LXIV.

To the ſame.

I AM overjoyed, my dear Child, to hear of your being ſafely delivered, and of a Boy. I told you that we were apt to repreſent to ourſelves Ills, greater than they are; and that on this Occaſion a Woman's Tenderneſs for her Child leſſens them by *one* half, whilſt her Love to her Huſband gives her Strength to bear the *other*. Thank God for his Favours. A good Huſband, a Son, Health! what other Bleſſings can you wiſh for? No one can have your Welfare at Heart more than myſelf. You will always deſerve my Friendſhip, and you ſhall always have it. Take Care of yourſelf. 'Tis one of our Duties to mind our Health. Whatever People may ſay, don't make yourſelf uneaſy *. You may depend upon me. It ſhall appear that you are the Favourite of a Favourite.

* About the Place of Sub-governeſs to the Children of *France*, which Madame *de Maintenon* had promiſed, and afterwards procured her.

LETTER

LETTER LXV.

To Madame de Glapion *.

October 14, 1699.

I AM ſatisfied that you ſhould love me; but you are not be ſad in my Abſence. If I require Cheerfulneſs in Sickneſs, judge, my dear Daughter, if I would excuſe Dejection in Friendſhip. Purſue with Joy the Deſign you acquaint me with. I practiſe myſelf the Advice I give you; and I am eaſy in my Mind, in Spite of my Mortification at being at ſo great a Diſtance from the Place in the World, where I enjoy myſelf moſt. But this diſagreeable Thought often returns; my Exile will laſt a long time. In my Place there are a Thouſand Reaſons to wiſh for Death, but Death is never the nearer. The King and the Dutcheſs of *Burgundy* are conſtantly in my Chamber. I muſt get up at Five to have Time to write to you. I am very ſorry for my Siſter *de Radouay*'s Illneſs. *St. Periers* is often indiſpoſed. Theſe are what we call good Conſtitutions! Adieu, my dear *Glapion*. Aſſure all your Siſters, from Madame *du Perou* down to Mademoiſelle *de la Palliere*,

* A Lady of *St. Lewis*.

that

that they have each a Place in my Heart; and figure it at the Hours of Recreation with this long Letter.

LETTER LXVI.

To a Lady of St. Lewis.

I Could very well perceive the Diſlike you have taken to your Confeſſors. You think them unpoliſhed. You want bright Geniuſes, People of a more delicate Way of Thinking. You'd fain go to Heaven by a Road ſtrewed with Flowers. But, my dear Daughter, you are a Chriſtian, and a Nun; and theſe two Words include a great many Duties. I may chuſe a Confeſſor if I pleaſe; yet I make uſe of your's. It would be an eaſy Matter for me to hear the beſt Preachers, and yet I prefer this Man's Simplicity. Make a Sacrifice of theſe Affections: You will, by doing it, merit more than by theſe Mortifications you don't aſk for, and which it gives you ſo much Pain not to aſk. Adieu, my dear Daughter. I feel no Complaint except a Weakneſs, by which my Underſtanding muſt ſoon ſuffer. Every thing is failing in me. I am a going; but my Senſibility for you and for *St. Cyr* continues as lively as ever.

LETTER

LETTER LXVII.

To a Lady of St. Lewis.

St. Cyr, March 31, 1700.

NO Nun of *St. Mary*'s would appear ſo cordial and affectionate as I ſhould, were I to tell you all my Sentiments for the Infirmary, and the good Siſter that preſides there. God ſhews you himſelf what he expects from you, the Practice of Charity, Retirement, the Mortification of not being able to celebrate with us his Death and his Reſurrection. I ſpoke this Morning to the Houſe aſſembled in Chapter, and after Dinner to the Siſters in particular. I am going to *Marli*, and this is not acting with the greateſt Regularity. Your Uprightneſs will enable you to unite the two Things, which you now think incompatible. Nothing but making Diſtinctions can afflict Women in a Convent, becauſe it humbles them. As to your Peeviſhneſs, my dear Daughter, it is but inconſiderable, ſince no one can perceive it. But you yourſelf felt it, and it ſhould be a Motive extraordinary for your continuing a ſtrict Watch over yourſelf. Employ yourſelf chearfully for the Glory of God. You owe him a great deal, and I hope you will pay him well.

LETTER

LETTER LXVIII.

To a Lady of St. Lewis.

DOn't loſe the Fruit of your good Diſcourſes, by acquainting others with your Uneaſineſs. Hide it carefully. Do what's better ſtill, baniſh it entirely. All the Good you mention, muſt be done by the Superiors. Love them therefore, and make thoſe under you reſpect them. Come out of your Retreat, full of Courage, full of Strength, full of Zeal. Leave to Children the Thoughts of Children; and haſten to your Aſſiſtance in eſtabliſhing a Houſe which ought to ſanctify the World. Don't think yourſelf harſh to the Sick: You are mild and charitable. But you would fain bring them to Reaſon; and 'tis requiring too much. The Deſire of being approved of, is natural; but ſtrive to love what is good, becauſe it is ſo; and to offer all to God. Self-love will always find Opportunities enough to inſinuate itſelf every where.

Whence this Averſion to the Catechiſm? Don't it contain the whole Subſtance of Religion? You think it ridiculous that the Maſter ſhould aſk Queſtions like a Scholar, and the Scholar anſwer like a Maſter. You would have the Queſtion put by the Child, and that after receiving

receiving an Anſwer, he ſhould reaſon a little, and ſo advance by his Curioſity from one thing to another. You may be in the right, but we muſt follow Cuſtom. Experience proves, that the Method you condemn is ſhort and eaſy. You again find Fault with the Catechiſm, becauſe it does not ſpeak in a ſuitable manner of our holy Myſteries; but how can Man ſpeak of what he can't comprehend. 'Tis impoſſible he ſhould not ſtammer, and communicate the Meanneſs of his Underſtanding to ſuch ſublime Subjects. I like you for perceiving it; but we muſt not quarrel with received Expreſſions. The Catechiſm is not to blame for it, 'Tis owing to the Greatneſs of the Myſteries. All theſe Notions are the Remains of Vanity. You would not have things that are common to all the World: Your Mind is elevated, and you would have things that were equally ſo. Unprofitable Ambition! The moſt learned Divine can't ſpeak to you of the Trinity otherwiſe than the Catechiſm does. Your Diſlike to teach Children common Truths in an uncommon manner, or ſublime Truths in an humble one, is another Matter of Sacrifice. Make uſe of your good Senſe, not to multiply your Averſions, but to overcome them, to hide them in the mean time, and to make you reliſh the Duties of your Condi-

tion.

tion. I ſhould not have been ſo ſevere as your Confeſſor in regard to Muſick; but probably he has his Reaſons. What Book is that you would be glad to read.

Don't make yourſelf uneaſy on Account of your little Fervor. If God required Auſterities from you, he would not have placed you in a Houſe where there are none but thoſe inſeperable from an active Life. The Violences you do your natural Diſpoſition for particular Connexions, is more acceptable than any corporal Auſterities. I don't ſpare you, but I depend ſo much on your Candour, that I don't look out for Failings in you. You have none but what you accuſe yourſelf of. Eighteen Hundred *Camiſards* have been defeated. I ſhall aſk a Proceſſion of our Mother to thank God for this Succeſs, however diſagreeable it may be to rejoice at the Death of thoſe Rebels, who, after all, were *Frenchmen*.

LETTER LXIX.

To Mademoiſelle d'Oſmond.

Verſailles, February 28, 1701.

I AM greatly rejoiced at your Eſtabliſhment, Madam, and I hope your Siſter will loſe nothing by giving you up every thing ſhe had. You

are

are going to marry a very worthy Gentleman. He prefers your Virtue to the great Fortune he might have with another; and you prefer his Virtue to the Fortune he intends to ſhare with you. With ſuch Sentiments Marriage cannot but be happy. God will bleſs a Pair who are united by Piety. I ſhall never ceaſe to love you, and to think of the Love you have for me. I have not, as you imagine, taken your Siſter with a View of keeping her conſtantly with me. She is going to return to *St. Cyr*, where, on Account of her Capacity, ſhe has been made Head of a Claſs. I ſhall take her Home to me, from time to time, that, by way of Relaxation, after acting ſo ſerious a Character. She is in great Favour with the Dutcheſs of *Burgundy*; and I have myſelf been very well pleaſed with her, this laſt Voyage. Adieu. Be the Pattern of your Province. Let it appear that you have been brought up at *St. Cyr*. I ſhall love you all my Life.

LETTER LXX.

To Madame du Peron.

February 24, 1701.

IT always appeared to me, that you were deſirous I ſhould write to you upon any thing I thought might concern your Houſe; and as ſuch

ſuch I conſider thoſe fine Tragedies, which I got compoſed for you, and which may hereafter be imitated. My Intention was to avoid the bad Compoſitions of Nuns, ſuch as I had ſeen at *Noiſi*. I thought it was proper that Children ſhould have ſome Diverſions, and I propoſed at the ſame time that I amuſed mine, to fill their Minds with beautiful Objects, inſpire them with grand Ideas of Religion, excite their Hearts to the Love of Virtue, adorn and improve their Memories, form their Pronunciation, and put a Stop to their private Converſations; thoſe eſpecially of the grown-up Girls, who from the Age of Fifteen to Twenty, are apt to find the Time heavy at *St. Cyr*, becauſe they don't know how People ſpend it in the World. Theſe are my Reaſons for continuing ſuch Entertainments in your Houſe, as long as your Superiors think fit to allow them. But let them be confined to your Houſe. Upon no Pretence whatſoever ſuffer them to be given at the Grate. It will always be dangerous to expoſe before Men, Girls well made, and who with the Charms of their Perſons unite the Talent of entering into the Spirit of their ſeveral Characters, and of making ſuitable Impreſſions upon the Spectators. Don't therefore permit any Man to be preſent at theſe Repreſentations, neither poor nor rich, young or old,

Prieſt

Prieſt or Layman, no, not even a Saint, if there's a Saint upon Earth. I am not without ſome Uneaſineſs for what we did Yeſterday *. You know how we came to engage in it; but I beſeech you it may be the laſt time.

LETTER LXXI.

To Madame de Glapion.

Monday, March 3, 1703.

WE want a great deal of being faithful to all our Reſolutions. 'Tis Weakneſs makes us fall, and Fervor that recovers us. We ſpend our Lives in aiming at Good, and doing Evil. However barren our Reſolutions may turn out, 'tis a great Bleſſing to have formed them; we always keep to ſome of them. Your Heart is made for God, my dear Daughter; and the more I know you, the more Hopes I have that you will give it entirely to him. I moſt ardently deſire your Salvation, yet I would not contribute to it by Falſehoods. To others I tell the Truth to ſatisfy my Duty, to you to ſatisfy my Inclination. You liſten to me. You improve. Your Diſcourſe is inſtructive, your Behaviour edifying. How many Reaſons then have I then to love you? You will be the Joy and Comfort of

* Before M. *d'Aubigny*, then Biſhop of *Noyon*.

your

your Superiors, and the Support of your Inſtitute. You will become a Saint, and will ſanctify others.

LETTER LXXII.

To Madame de Beaulieu.

1703.

THE firſt Miſtreſs of a Claſs ought to figure it a little at the Hours of Recreation, and to be the Perſon to give an Account of me to others. But I can ſay nothing to divert you. My Heart is ready to burſt, on account of our Princeſs's * Affliction, ſince the Duke of *Savoy* declared War againſt the King.

Oh! my dear Daughters, how happy are you to have quitted the World! It promiſes Joy, and gives none. Yeſterday the King of *England* played in my Room at every kind of Game with the Dutcheſs of *Burgundy*, and her Ladies. Our King and the Queen of *England* looked on. 'Twas nothing but Dancing and Tranſports of Pleaſure; the whole Company were doing themſelves Violence to hide that Grief which pierced them to the Heart. The World moſt certainly is a Cheat; and you can't too much acknowledge God's Goodneſs in taking you out of it.

* Daughter to the Duke of *Savoy*, and married to the Duke of *Burgundy*, the Dauphin's eldeſt Son.

LETTER

LETTER LXXIII.

To the Ladies of St. Lewis.

July 13, 1704.

I Hope your own Experience will give you a Diſguſt for new Writings, and convince you that we ought to draw our Inſtructions from, and be excited to, the Practice of Virtue by thoſe who have always been the Foundation of Religion. There are a thouſand edifying Things, which we may make uſe of with the Permiſſion of thoſe who conduct us; but all this ought to be for a time only. You know with what Intention I took upon me to make you acquainted with the Biſhop of *Cambray* *, and his Works. He was a Man of great Reputation, and I took him for a Saint. I never had any thing that was good, which I was not deſirous of ſharing with you: 'Twas with this View I filled your Houſe with his Works. You know what Miſchief they did there. Judge by this Event with what Diſcretion Zeal is to be tempered. Judge of the great Neceſſity there is for ſerious Deliberation, when any thing new in Opinion or Practice is to be conſidered.

* Monſieur *Fenelon*— She here means ſome ſpiritual Performances.

had

I had heard a great deal of *Janſeniſm* from my Youth, and was no Stranger to its Maxims; and God gave me the Grace of hating all Party Affairs. But I had not the leaſt Notion of *Quietiſm*, and ſo gave into the Sentiments of Monſieur *de Cambray* without ſeeing the Danger of them. I began to ſuſpect him as ſoon as I ſaw that his Brethren, and his beſt Friends contradicted him; and the Inſtructions I ſought made me ſoon perceive the Illuſion, from which it has pleaſed God to preſerve me. While we were waiting for the Deciſions of Rome, where the Affair was carried, I often found myſelf perplexed between the Zeal that urged me to ſpeak againſt that Doctrine, and the Friendſhip that invited me to ſpeak for Monſieur *de Cambray*. I conſulted Monſieur *Joly*, General of the Miſſion, your Superior, and a man very worthy of my Eſteem. His Anſwer was, that we ſhould cry out not only againſt the *Neſtorians*, but likewiſe againſt *Neſtorius*, becauſe it was difficult to make People hate the Hereſy while we made them love the Broacher of it. *Rome* condemned Monſieur *de Cambray*'s Doctrine; and he ſubmitted. I then found myſelf in another Difficulty. Could I think this Submiſſion ſincere till I ſaw the Prelate, like St. *Paul*, preach up the Faith he had oppoſed. This Diſpoſition of my

won I

Heart gave me ſome Scruple, which I made known to a proper Perſon. He told me the Rule by which I judged of the Sincerity of Monſieur *de Cambray*'s Submiſſion, was the ſame that St. *Auguſtin* preſcribed in ſimilar Caſes. From that Moment my Mind was at Eaſe. I ſhall not think a Perſon recovered from his Error, till I ſee him attack it with as much Strength as he exerted in ſupporting it. Be conſtantly on your Guard, but with Diſcretion, to preſerve our Daughters from Novelties. Endeavour to inſpire them with a Taſte for a Simplicity of Obedience, and to make them practiſe it. 'Tis the Road to Peace and Security. I will ſign theſe Truths with my Blood, whenever you require it.

LETTER LXXVI.

To Madame de Montalembert *.

Auguſt 10, 1704.

WHAT a deal I ſhould have to ſay to you, my dear Daughter, could I tell you all I felt at our Seperation. I beg you may pardon my Doubts; you have ſufficiently convinced me of your Courage and your Fidelity, to follow the Will of Heaven. I never loved you ſo much as

* She left *St. Cyr* to become a *Capucin* Nun.

I now

I now do. The Abbé *Brisacier* forwarded to me directly at *Marli* the Letter you wrote to him. I read it over and over with the greateſt Pleaſure. I diſcovered in it ſuch Peace and Joy, as God alone can inſpire. Continue to enter into Particulars, ſuch as *the Superiors in your Houſe are as reſerved in permitting extraordinary Mortifications, as they are exact in requiring what the Rule enjoins.* You may gueſs I ſhall not forget this Sentence. I am laying up a great Stock of good Senſe, by making that my own which I perceive in others. I wiſh greatly I could reap any Advantage from the prudent Government of your holy Houſe, eſtabliſhed by Saints. Inſtruct me therefore, my dear Daughter. Obtain for us the Prayers of Siſters, for all our Inſtitute, and for me in particular. Continue to love *St. Cyr*; and pray for its Perfection. Your leaving it has been taken by the Ladies there in the Light you would wiſh, if you could any longer be affected with the Opinion of others. They were moved, edified; but not troubled. If your Confeſſor comes to *Moret* during my Stay there, you may be ſure I ſhall ſpeak to him. Thoſe who have conducted you to God, will always be agreeable to me. I ſhall go and embrace you before you take your Vows. Shall I be admitted? How in-

comprehenſible is God in his Deſigns, my dear Daughter! and how good he is to ſweeten our Croſſes in the manner he does!

LETTER LXXV.

To the Marchioneſs d'Havrincour.

February 24, 1705.

YOU have now, my dear Daughter, two things, only, to do; ſerve God, and pleaſe your Huſband. Be prodigal of your Complaiſance to him; enter into all his Fancies; ſuffer all his Oddities; but never let him have any of yours to ſuffer. If he is jealous, ſee no-body. If he has a Mind you ſhould appear in the great World, appear there; but always with that Moderation which Virtue requires.

You'll ſoon be a Governor's Lady. Inform yourſelf what Good may be done by the firſt Woman of a Town, and do it. Never be without Women of Character in your Company. You are too young to launch into the World without an irreproachabe Witneſs of your Conduct. Your Huſband, let him be what he will, will like you the better for it. Be circumſpect in your Connexions with Women. 'Tis better to be ſeen at the Opera with ſome Men, than at a Sermon with ſome Women.

Love

Love the Preſence of your Huſband, love his Company. Never make a Myſtery of any thing to him. Let even your Prayers be longer or ſhorter, according to his Taſte. This Complaiſance is itſelf a Prayer.

To obey him is the firſt Duty of the Marriage State. To bring up your Children, the ſecond. Take Care of them before they are born, and don't expoſe their Health and their Salvation by any Indiſcretions. Omit nothing to make them good Chriſtians. Render to them the Education you have received yourſelf. Prepare yourſelf againſt the Uneaſineſs they will give you. I hope they will be worthy of you; but never ſtrip yourſelf in their Favour. The World is ſo dangerous!—It may be they'll go to a Ball, the Day on which you will be receiving the extreme Unction.

Carefully avoid Exceſs at Play. You have ſeen the Misfortunes with which a Paſſion for Play is generally attended.

Love Work, Solitude, and thoſe Reflections that ſerve to make us know ourſelves, and correct our Failings. No Haughtineſs. Be ſteddy and mild in your domeſtick Affairs. Never give into the ridiculous Exceſſes of the Faſhion. Decency requires you ſhould follow them, and Modeſty requires you ſhould follow them at a Diſtance. Let me never hear it ſaid, my dear *d'Oſmond*, that you

make a great Figure. Some People think 'tis an Encomium, but never make a Trial of it.

You have been educated in the pureſt Doctrine. You underſtand your Religion very well. You are even pious. Abhor Novelties in Opinion; never ſpeak of them; or, if you do, let it be with the greateſt Reſerve.

I ſhall not ſpeak of the Duties of a good *French* Woman. You have too many Obligations to the King ever to fail in that Love and Reſpect which his Subjects owe him. You are ſtill more particularly bound in Point of Gratitude to pray all the Days of your Life for his ſacred Perſon. People at preſent take great Liberties with Princes. Never permit any to be taken with ours, before you; you, who know him better than any one beſides.

In fine, my dear Daughter, be a good Chriſtian, a good Wife, a good Mother, and you will fulfil your Duty, eſtabliſh your Reputation, and aſſure your Salvation *.

* The original of theſe Rules of Conduct is in the Hands of the Marchioneſs *d'Havrincourt*, who reads them over every Morning; and 'tis to a punctual Compliance with them ſhe is indebted for that exalted Piety which edifies all her Province, the ſolid eſtabliſhment of her Fortune, and the flouriſhing Condition of her Family, tho' very numerous.

LETTER LXXVI.

To Madame de Glapion.

St. Cyr, July 4, 1705.

MY Life is not free from Trouble. Your little Billet, my dear Daughter, gave me great Comfort. I am tranſported to find you enjoying that Peace which ſurpaſſes all human Underſtanding. I often told you of it; God alone deſerves the Heart he has given you. I am very well ſatisfied with the Community. I ſee that you advance in Piety, that there reigns a great Union among you, that the Superiors are obeyed, that the Miniſters of J. C. are reſpected in a Spirit of Faith, that you have no longer any Curioſity for the World, that your Parlours are deſerted, that our younger Siſters are forming themſelves in the Duties requiſite for the Education of Youth, that our aged Siſters bear with great Virtue their being deprived of that Employment. In fine, my dear Daughter, our Community will be perfect when once we have got the better of that Love of Eaſe, we ſo often lament. I would be glad to ſee a Lady of *St. Lewis* ſacrifice her Health and her Life, as ſhe has ſacrificed her Liberty. This Improvement, which gives us all ſo much Joy, can only be pre-

ſerved by conſtant Application. We muſt ſee every thing, reprove every thing, correct every thing. You don't, methinks, unbend your Mind. You have no particular Connexions; and your Self-love deprives itſelf of every thing that may ſerve to nouriſh it. Come therefore to the Recreation *, and leave Mademoiſelle *de Plantadis* in your Place.

LETTER LXXVII.

To Madame de la Viefville †.

September 17, 1705.

THE Cardinal has but juſt left me. We ſpoke of your Affairs. He is of Opinion you ſhould go to *Gomer-Fontaines*, ſince you have Health enough to obſerve the Rule of the Order on your Arrival there. He conſents to the Croſs, if your Convent inſiſts upon it, but has informed me, that Abbeſſes do not receive one at their Benediction. He approves of my writ-

* They give this Name in Colleges and Convents to the Time allowed for Recreation, or rather the Meeting held for that Purpoſe.

† Educated at *St. Cyr*, and made Abbeſs of *Gomer-Fontaines*, a Houſe of *Bernardin* Nuns, where Madame *de Maintenon*, it ſeems, was willing to introduce the Methods of Education eſtabliſhed at *St. Cyr*.

ing to Monſieur *de Ciſteaux*, and I ſhall do it as ſoon as poſſible. If the Convent has not ſigned the Leaſes of your Eſtates, the Bargain is void. He has little Hopes of Madame de *Grancey*'s Debt. He will immediately ſend for you, but as he is ſo much taken up otherwiſe, adviſes you to put him in mind of it. I don't know but I may ſee you again on *Saturday* or *Sunday* next, at *Verſailles*. Conſult on this Occaſion your own Conveniency. I hate Ceremony. You may write to me as much as you pleaſe; and I ſhall always exert myſelf to have a Share in the Good I hope you will, with God's Bleſſing, be able to perform. If there is any thing at *St. Cyr*, that ſuits you, I make you an Offer of it, with all my Heart. If there was any Girl there diſpoſed to become a Nun with us, I would diſpenſe with the Rule, and let her leave the Houſe before ſhe was Twenty. I would beſides pay her Penſion during her Noviciate. But perhaps you'll think it better to ſee your Convent before you bring any one into it. You may, when fixed there, apply to us for Aſſiſtance for your Penſioners. You ſhall never have any Trouble with ſuch as I may ſend to you, for I will take them back if you ſhould diſlike them. I dictate this Letter while I dreſs myſelf, that you may have it the ſooner. I reckon among the Number of Compli-

ments, the ceremonious Manner in which you write to me. For the future let it be by way of Billet, as I write to you. No Correſpondence, unleſs it be quite free and eaſy on both Sides.

Inform me of every thing that paſſes at your Arrival at *Gomer-Fontaines*. Take Care of the Girls I ſhall commit to your Charge. Young as you are, behave to them like a Mother. Nothing can equal Monſieur *de Citeaux*'s Politeneſs. Judge of it by the Letter I ſend you. The Marechal *de Noailles* will inform me who the Abbé *de la Charmoiſe* is. If I have contributed to give you a good Confeſſor, I have certainly done you the greateſt Service you could wiſh for. You may depend, Madam, on my Friendſhip on every other Occaſion where I can be uſeful to you. Your Houſe will become a ſecond *St. Cyr* to me. I ſhall not mention my Eſteem and Affection for yourſelf in particular. Can you doubt of it.

LETTER LXXVIII.

To the ſame.

October 5, 1705.

WOULD to Heaven your Nuns would love and confide in me! We might then do ſome good, and it is merely for that Purpoſe, Providence

vidence has placed me where I am. Inſtruct our Nuns well on the Conſequence of making Connections. Thoſe who made any ſhould be immediately diſcharged. Nothing is more dangerous in religious Houſes. The Diſorders you take Notice of, would diſcourage a Perſon of leſs Virtue. Bear with your Burthen, ſince it is God who has impoſed it.

Work with Moderation, that you may work the longer. *D'Aumale* * ſhould think herſelf happy that God employs her ſo early in his Service. Gain the Love of your Community, and you will have gained every thing.

I will forgive you nothing. I will give you what I can, and I can give but little. The Girls at *St. Cyr* don't receive their Thouſand Crowns till they are Twenty. It is one of our Rules, and I never diſpenſe with it. If any of your Nuns offer a poor Niece to you, take two of them: That you may procure their Affections by this little Service, I will pay their Penſion.

My firſt Letter may be ſhewn to the Community, if you think proper. Adieu. I am very tired. I embrace *d'Aumale*. I imagine ſhe muſt be greatly aſtoniſhed.

* A young Lady ſent to *Gomer-Fontaines*, to Madame *de la Vieuville*.

LETTER

LETTER LXXIX.

To the same.

October 11, 1705.

I AM overjoyed to find, Madam, that the Ladies at *Gomer-Fontaines* ſtill remember me. You know how I ſpoke of them, and how much I intereſt myſelf for their Welfare. My Friendſhip is increaſed by ſeeing one of my Pupils placed over them. I hope, with their Concurrence, the Service of God will be well attended to in your Houſe, and that through their Means the Principles of a good Education will be diſperſed all over the whole Province.

'Tis impoſſible your Convent ſhould not have ſuffered both in its ſpiritual and temporal Concerns, by the long Government of an Abbeſs whoſe Underſtanding was impaired. God now gives them one, who is young, prudent, full of good Intentions, and whom we ſhall aſſiſt on every Occaſion.

I was a Stranger to Mademoiſelle *de Blezel*'s remaining at *Paris*. I am very much afraid that Mademoiſelle *d'Aumale* ſhould have too much Fatigue. I ſhould be glad ſhe received the Aſſiſtance you require, ſince you aſſure me that the Nuns of your Houſe ſee ours with Pleaſure; for

I would

I would not do them a Kindneſs againſt their Will; and the young Ladies of *St. Cyr* can only pleaſe me by honouring the Nuns of your Houſe, and by not taking Scandal at Things there, which may appear new to them. Every Community has its own Cuſtoms. If therefore my Children ſhould happen to ſtray, you will endeavour to bring them back into the right Road.

LETTER LXXX.

To the ſame.

October 14, 1705.

I Anſwered you before-hand, that I underſtood Buſineſs very ill. Form a Council of your Confeſſor, if a Man of Senſe, and of ſome honeſt Gentleman in your Neighbourhood fit to be truſted. Have you not already a Council for petty domeſtic Concerns, compoſed of the moſt ancient Nuns. Always reſerve to yourſelf the Liberty of deciding. The youngeſt ſometimes hit upon good Advice. By conſulting in this manner, the Nuns with whom you have deliberated will find themſelves bound to ſupport any thing it may be thought proper to eſtabliſh. Let your Council aſſiſt, not govern you.

I did

I did not think proper to lecture your Nuns in my firſt Letter. I hope I ſaid nothing in it to diſpleaſe them.

I forget the Letter for Mademoiſelle *de Beauveau*. She is very happy in having her Penſion continued to her. This is not a Time for increaſing them.

I deſire Madame *de Fontaine* to ſend you Twenty *Louis*, to anſwer your moſt preſſing Wants. I pity you greatly.

October 17.

I obtained, and without Difficulty, two Hundred Livres from Cardinal *de Noailles*, two Hundred from the Maréchal, two Hundred from the Duke of *Burgundy*, two Hundred from the Dutcheſs, and four Hundred from the King, making in all fifteen Hundred Livres, which you are to huſband as the laſt Reſource to be had from this Quarter. Had I been able, my dear Child, I ſhould have done better.

You muſt make Wax-candles. You muſt ſpin your own Cloaths. Your Nuns can't work too much. You muſt employ and amuſe them within Doors, to keep them from the Parlours, which are the Diſgrace and Scandal of all Convents. I am always over-joy'd when I hear the Ladies of *St. Lewis* ſay, they would be perfectly

happy.

happy if the Days were two Hours longer. We cannot indeed lengthen them; let us however fill them with good Works! What Satisfaction muſt it not give you at Bed-time, to look back upon a Day, in which you can obſerve no Void?

LETTER LXXXI.

To a Lady of St. Cyr.

1705.

NOthing is ſo moving as the Affliction of our Princes, and nothing more edifying than the Manner in which they bear it: The King's Thoughts were entirely taken up about the Child's Happineſs, with reſpect to the Uncertainty of Salvation, among the Great eſpecially. The Duke of *Burgundy* is full of *Abraham*'s Sentiments, in offering up his Son. The Dutcheſs of *Burgundy*'s Grief is ſo exquiſite, ſo holy, ſo diſcreet, ſo mild, that not a ſingle Word eſcaped her, which did not charm us all. The Duke of *Bern*'s Eyes are in a Condition which proves the Goodneſs of his Heart. All the Court is afflicted, and I have my Share in their Sorrow, but I know not how to yield to it. I am pleaſed with every thing that pleaſes God, tho' on this Occaſion he tries me by the Loſs of what I moſt tenderly

tenderly loved. Adieu, my dear Children. Strengthen yourſelves in Faith, and in good Works. We ſhall have a great deal to ſuffer as long as we continue in this World, and have therefore great Need to be well founded upon God. Let not the Condition we are in, grieve you. God will not always be angry with us; and I hope he will conſole us.

LETTER LXXXII.

To Madame de la Viefville.

October 24, 1705.

WHENCE this Silence, my dear Abbeſs? I was, I aſſure you, under no ſmall Concern at not hearing from you, though I wrote you two pretty long, and, I think, obliging Letters.

When you get to be Miſtreſs of the Novices, you will be in the right not to deſire any other. I don't imagine Madame *de Fontaine* can be of any great Service to you in that Station. You have your Conſtitutions, your Rules, and your Cuſtoms, from which we muſt not deviate. Don't attempt to graft the Spirit of *St. Cyr* upon them. They are Obligations of quite a different Nature. As to thoſe Things which are common to all religious Houſes, a Sequeſtration from

the

the World, a Contempt of its Vanities, the Love of Solitude, and Diſintereſtedneſs, you will find them all in yourſelves. I don't much approve your Reaſons for opening your Noviciate ſo early, for fear our Girls ſhould form Connections with thoſe that were there before them. You will never make good Nuns of them, if they ſhould be diſpoſed to form Connections with any but yourſelf. I always took *la Gatine* for a good Girl. I know *Blezel* better. She behaved like a Saint during her Noviceſhip at *St. Cyr*, and ſince ſhe left it. At my Return I ſhall look you out ſome Girls to take the Veil at your Houſe, and I will ſend you *Martainville* to aſſiſt Mademoiſelle *d'Aumale*.

I am exceeding glad to find you aſking Advice of your Nuns. On this Occaſion you muſt proceed with great Uprightneſs and Simplicity.

Decide by yourſelf, when you find Opinions divided. I don't look upon you as ſelf-intereſted, but only under a great Neceſſity. I had a Mind to let you know at firſt, what I can and what I cannot do. I am frank and open with others, and I love that others ſhould be ſo with me. Your Virtue has attached me to you, more than the Conſideration of your being a Child of *St. Cyr*. I would be glad to aſſiſt you in re-eſtabliſhing a Houſe, that might edify the Church,

and

and all the Province. Continue your Prayers for the King, and for a Peace. I ſhall lecture your Community, ſince you deſire it, as ſoon as I can find Leiſure, and a proper Opportunity. I believe you ought to faſt according to your Rules. Conſult Cardinal *de Noailles* in four or five Words; which ſend to me, and I will make him anſwer. Is it not cuſtomary in your Houſes to make the Poſtulants practice your Auſterities by Degrees.

Don't permit them to ſaddle you with every troubleſome Buſineſs. The Biſhop of *Chalons* knows very well that the King never pays the Penſions he gives thoſe who deſire to become Nuns, but the Day of their Profeſſion. After that they are punctually paid. But never receive, my dear Child, on any Pretence whatſoever, any but Girls of extraordinary Merit. Send back the young Ladies of *St. Cyr*, whenever you have Reaſon to think they will not make good *Bernardin* Nuns. Conſider that you will have it to anſwer for before God, who will not accept as an Excuſe your Condeſcenſions for Madame *de Maintenon*, nor your Gratitude for your Friends and Benefactors.

I call a good Subject, a Girl who belongs intirely to God, who is ſincerely deſirous of obſerving her Rule, who renounces the World,

who retains no Correſpondence in it, who loves to obey, who is well humoured, has a quiet Conſcience, is chearful and couragious. Such, I think, is *du Blezel*; if I am miſtaken, ſend her back.

LETTER LXXXIII.

To the ſame.

November 2, 1705.

YOU know better than I can tell you, that there is a Difference between the Faſts commanded by the Rules of any religious Order, and thoſe enjoined by the Church. I have juſt forwarded your Letter to the Cardinal. I don't know if I have exactly complied with your Intentions in what I wrote concerning the Confeſſor. If he is truly pious, you muſt endeavour to keep him, tho' not a Man of bright Parts. Nothing is ſo hard to find out as a Confeſſor every way agreeable. You are a ſurpriſing Perſon to think your Nuns take up a long Time to return to their primitive Inſtitution, I think you are very happy in having Reaſon to hope they will return to it at any Rate.

Don't truſt the Care of the Novices to any other, I expect great Matters from *du Blezel*.

She

She has nothing ſtriking in her, but ſhe has all the Solidity that can be wiſhed for. She was to have been received here, and we make you a Preſent of her. Let not the young Ladies, I lend you, ſee any Men within or without Doors, that they may not bring back with them evil Habits or Diſpoſitions. Return them to us as pure and as innocent as you receive them.

Chuſe ſome truſty Perſon among the Inhabitants of *Giſors*. People of Quality are ſeldom uſeful.

I am greatly edified at your Manner of ſpending your Time. I don't think you ought to do more. You owe yourſelf to the Government of your Convent.

Render your Recreations free and cheerful. You will ſucceed at laſt. It is a great Advantage, as it ſerves to break particular Connections, and contributes to a general Union. I embrace our Daughters, and yours.

LETTER

LETTER LXXXIV.

To the ſame.

November 5, 1705.

HERE is my Anſwer to you, made by the Cardinal.

"As to the Queſtion concerning her Faſts, "I think ſhe ought to put up with the cuſto- "mary Relaxation of her Nuns, whoſe Age "and ancient Habitudes require ſuch a tolera- "tion. But as to herſelf, ſhe ought to follow "the Practice ſhe ſaw and followed at the Ab- "bey of *Argenſoles*, where ſhe took up the Re- "form, and eſtabliſh it for the Girls ſhe may "hereafter receive, but with due Regard to "their Strength and Conſtitution; for the Su- "periors of this Order have great Latitude in "what Concerns the Faſts preſcribed by their "Rules."

I have ſome Objections to your having a Friar to your Confeſſor, becauſe I imagine good Friars are not fond of quitting their Cells, and others are dangerous. Two Confeſſors in your Houſe will divide it into Parties, or be jealous of one another.

I don't

I don't know why you are ſo ſtruck with thoſe Communions before Maſs, for, in my Opinion, God eaſily pardons involuntary Faults, and this Inconvenience muſt ceaſe, when your Nuns have acquired more Courage. Make uſe of People that you may get rid of whenever you pleaſe; and in all Things follow the Cuſtoms of your Order.

Is it not going at a great Rate, to give the Veil at the End of two Months? And do you make yourſelf a Slave to human Policy in receiving them? Won't you receive the Neices of your Nuns, if they approve themſelves good Subjects, and diſcharge them if they do not. Let us proceed uprightly, my dear Child, always, and in all Things, but eſpecially in Things of Conſequence.

You can't do better than diſcharge your intriguing Maid, and hire in her ſtead ſome ſober edifying Perſon. A great many Suſpicions have been running in my Head concerning . . . .

I wiſh you had in your Houſe ſome Lady that could play well on the Organ, but I would be better pleaſed you had no Organ, than a bad Subject in your Houſe. I don't know Madame *de Clairets*, and therefore cannot write to her. But I have heard ſo much good of her, that I believe

believe her Acquaintance cannot but prove uſeful to you.

Let me know, I beg of you, how your Penſioners fare in regard to Bedding.

I have put into Madame *de Fontaine*'s Hands, beſides the 1500 Livres, that I promiſed you, 170 more, becauſe the King gave forty *Louis* inſtead of four Hundred Livres.

You ought to be very well ſatisfied with the ſmalleſt Progreſs you obſerve. 'Tis a great Matter that your Nuns don't oppoſe your good Deſigns. Is it true that ſome of them came to deliver you up Money after one of your ſpiritual Conferences? I am very ſorry that you ſhould have Madame *le Prince* in your Neighbourhood. You'll find it a hard Matter to avoid quarrelling with her Servants.

You ſee with what Regularity I anſwer you, becauſe I love you, and that I believe ſome Good may be done. I embrace our dear Daughters.

LETTER

LETTER LXXXV.

To the ſame.

November 28, 1705.

I AM now to anſwer two of your Letters, one of the 23d, the other of the 24th. You ſhall receive of mine as long as they can be of any Service to you. To ſuch alone I confine myſelf, and I adviſe you to follow my Example. I am perſuaded the Silence preſcribed to religious Perſons regards writing as much as ſpeaking. You will, perhaps, think me a little ſevere. But I ſhall tell you the Truth, my dear Abbeſs, as long as I continue to correſpond with you.

I wiſh the Relations of your Penſioners may conſent to their wearing the Uniform Dreſs you think to give them. They will be well enough cloathed, if warm in Winter, cool in Summer, and their Stays always good. I have forwarded your Letter to Father *de la Chaiſe*. I wiſh he may give ſomething to the little *de Levi*, that every thing may not fall upon the King. I think that, in ſpite of the Hurry of your Buſineſs, you may amuſe yourſelf a little. 'Tis not in my Power to inſpire Sentiments of Piety. But it is ſtill leſs your Duty to fret at the

little

little Progreſs you obſerve in your Nuns. Are you not happy that they let you go on, and diſcover no Averſion to your young Ladies from *St. Cyr?* Don't be tired of praying for them. Give them good Example. Treat them with Mildneſs; and wait the reſt from God. I ſhall obtain a Lottery for you, if poſſible.

You may depend upon being on good Terms with me, when I call you obſtinate. Be perſuaded I chide none but thoſe I love. I don't think that your Letter of the 24th requires any Anſwer, except that you are improved in your Orthography, yet not ſo much as you imagine.

You muſt lay no great Streſs on the Aſſiſtance of *St. Cyr*, as it depends on my Life, and you can only expect from thence Girls in their twentieth Year. Beſides it is a Priviledge which the Ladies of *St. Lewis* will loſe at my Death. Adieu, Madam, adieu, my dear Daughters.

LETTER LXXXVI.

To the ſame.

December 6, 1705.

IN anſwer to your Letter of the 2d. I believe the Abbé *de Vaſſe*'s Intentions are very good; but they all terminate in making me

very importunate, and I know, better than him, in what manner I am to behave.

To answer the Question you propose, I should know what is the Fault, and what the Dispositions of the Person you have a Mind to admonish. It is a Maxim at *St. Cyr* to begin always with gentle Methods.

I send you three little Pensioners. One of them a Child, whose Parentage I am unacquainted with *. The two others are Girls of Family. They are to stay with you till they are taken into *St. Cyr*.

Be punctual, I beg of you; clear and precise in Business. Apply to me directly. I have been these two Months past asking for a Direction to write to you, and half that Time waiting for the Names of the little ones you have received. I love Order. All these Particulars should be entered in a Book. I never burn your Letters till I have answered them, and I answer every Article. Don't amuse yourself in paying me Compliments; it's Time lost. Let us endeavour to re-establish your House. I hope to be able to

* A little Creature, five Years old, whom she found alone upon the Road; with a Paper which gave an Account of her Age, and her being baptized. Madame *de Maintenon* often received Presents of this kind.

give you ſome little Aſſiſtance towards the End of *January*, or the Beginning of *February*.

LETTER LXXXVII.

To the ſame.

December 14, 1705.

YOU have juſt Reaſon to be perplexed, Madam, for it is a hard Matter to introduce Regularity into a Houſe without the Aſſiſtance of Perſons in whom we may repoſe a Confidence. In general, young Nuns are not to be placed at the Doors, as they are more expoſed there than elſewhere. But it is in your Power to chuſe on the Occaſion. Our Girls are not unfaithful, but yet they are not incorruptible.

I have juſt wrote to the Abbé *Brunet*, in the ſtrongeſt Terms I could think of. You are ſerved with a Punctuality, which even aſtoniſhes myſelf, for I always find Time to do your Buſineſs. Methinks God favours you in a particular manner. I beg of him that you may ever prefer your ſpiritual to your temporal Concerns. I tell you what I think, but I don't mean to lay you under Reſtraints either in regard to your Singing, or any thing elſe. The Miſtreſs of your Novices writes a very ſenſible Letter. Has my Anſwer been equally ſo? Accuſtom her to

have Recourſe to you in the Government of her Novices, by giving her now and then your Aſſiſtance. I'm told you ſit up to have the more Time: I beſeech you, my dear Daughter, to be ſatisfied with fulfilling your daily Duties. Cardinal *de Noailles* continues ill of the Gout. The Duke of *Noailles* is about ſetting out for *Rouſillon*, in order to ſerve in *Spain*. I recommend them to your Prayers.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

To Madame de la Vieſville.

December 20, 1705.

IT is not merely about what you write to me, that I now intend to ſpeak, but of every thing concerning you, that comes into my Head. I beſeech you, my dear Daughter, to take Advantage of my Experience, and beware of running after thoſe Things which were once ſo much in Vogue at *St. Cyr*. A Paſſion for Manuſcripts prevailed there for a long time; but they did us ſo much Miſchief, that we were at length obliged to proſcribe them. I ſaid it was not proper to ſend you the *Meditations* you call for. 'Twould be throwing away Time, to beſtow it on the Peruſal of ſuch Pieces: There are ſo many good Books, and ſo few that you really ſtand in need

of!

of! The New Teſtament, the *Imitation*, *Grenada*, *Rodriquez*, *St. Francis de Sales*, and the Book of your Order, are more than enough to ſanctify you. The Time you ſpend at Church, and in diſcharging the Duties of your ſeveral Employments, leaves you, I'm ſure, but little Leiſure, and 'tis no great Matter. Reading does Nuns more Harm than Good. Thoſe who are ſimple of Heart, put up with the Books I have mentioned, and even among thoſe Nuns there are ſome, who abuſe that moderate Latitude they allow themſelves. Others would paſs for Wits, and are the Means of exciting an inſatiable Curioſity. We have experienced all theſe Inconveniences, and I muſt tell you once more, I wiſh you would improve by our Miſtakes.

Is it not a little indiſcreet of you to endeavour to keep Mademoiſelle *d'Aumale*, becauſe ſhe is uſeful to you; as tho' ſhe was not equally uſeful to us? You muſt therefore conſent, my dear Abbeſs, to return her to me about *Eaſter*.

I beſeech you, my dear Daughter, not to betray ſo much Fondneſs for *St. Cyr*. I'm afraid the old Nuns ſhould take a Diſlike to you. Behave to them in a friendly manner. For my Part, I have the greateſt Regard for them. I long mightily to aſſiſt you in re-eſtabliſhing their Houſe, and in ſecuring to them Peace here, and Happineſs hereafter.

LETTER LXXXIX.

To the same.

December 31.

MY Letter will be delivered to you by the Abbé *Brunet*. You cannot, Madam, place too great a Confidence in him. He is really a Saint, who seeks for nothing but the Salvation of Souls, and who waits upon you with the most zealous Wishes for the Welfare of you and your Community. Were he to value himself upon being recommended, I would tell you that he had the Cardinal's Recommendation; and mine likewise, which is one of those he esteems most. I don't know if your Nuns will relish his Simplicity. I am sure those of *St. Cyr* would be overjoyed to see him, and hear him; for, God be praised, they are no longer Wits at *St. Cyr*, but have acquired a commendable Taste for Simplicity and Solitude.

'Tis an easy Matter to see there can be no Harm in loving you, but it would be very wrong in our Girls to become Nuns from such a Motive. God alone deserves so great a Sacrifice; and God alone can make them amends for it.

In your Letter to the Prince, say, That, you might have got Cardinal de *Noailles*, or Ma-

dame

dame *de Maintenon*, to have ſpoke to him, but that you choſe to depend entirely on his own Goodneſs. If you have any Regard for me, you'll not ſet up any more. I ſhall be tranſported to find you here To-morrow, at the Head of my dear Daughters, who are doubly dear to me, on Accouut of their good Behaviour under your Government.

I hope that you will bleſs God for having ſent her to you; and by your prudent Advice, and zealous Aſſiſtance, that *Gomer-Fontaines* will become under her Government an Example and Pattern to other Abbeys.

LETTER XC.

To Madame de Fontenay.

EVERY thing is carried on to the moſt deplorable Exceſs. The King is greatly affected with what he knows, but he knows not all. 'Tis unjuſt to lay all theſe Calamities at my Door: Were it true that I had a Hand in every thing, ſome good Counſel ſhould be aſcribed to me. I have now been in Favour fifteen Years, without having done the leaſt Injury to any one. I have made many Male-contents, yet was I never guilty of Baſeneſs or Injuſtice. The King has often reproached me with Moderation; 'tis better

better he ſhould reproach me with that than with Importunity. I flattered myſelf I had acquired great Inſenſibility for the Things of this World; eſpecially for the Cenſures of People that are Strangers to Devotion, but I find myſelf as much behind-hand as when I firſt began to ſtruggle with my Paſſions. L * * * gives me infinite Trouble, ſets me at Defiance, avails himſelf of Monſieur *de Vendome*'s Protection, and will never pardon my Diſcovery of his Intention to deceive me.

LETTER XCI.

To Madame de Fontenay.

I Know what People make the Duke of *Maine* ſay, but they never will be able to imbroil us. He offered to give the moſt undeniable Satisfaction, and I refuſed it. If he is guilty, his Guilt is ſo ſmall that I ſhould do ill to take Offence at it: It proceeds from Sentiments of filial Tenderneſs; and how could I condemn him, I who did all that lay in my Power, tho' in vain, to make him love his Mother better than me? I don't doubt but Madame *de Monteſpan* would have been charmed at an open Rupture, but I ſhall never give her that Pleaſure.

LETTER XCII.

To Madame de Fontenay.

THE News from *Poland* is ſo agreeable, that I could no longer refuſe the Princeſs of *Conti* what ſhe had been ſo long wiſhing for. The Abbé *de Polignac* gives all the Family an Air of Grandeur, which is far from being diſagreeable. The Prince ſets out To-morrow; 'tis rather too late, but it can't be help'd. Now Madame *de Simiane* liſtens only to her own Caprice: You know the Nature of it. I have left her to her own Conduct. I never took upon me to govern Women, that I did not repent it. Men are by much the more docile and manageable.

LETTER XCIII.

To the ſame.

MY Wiſhes are at Length granted.

No: Since the Diſgrace
Of the proud Vaſhti, *in whoſe Place I ſtand*—

I never felt a Pleaſure equal to that I now enjoy. I congratulate you on your Victory. Your Joy is mine; I am thoroughly ſenſible of it. This Competition alarmed me. Every thing

has changed in an Inſtant. Let us refer all to him, who diſtributes Happineſs and Miſery as he thinks fit. This Thought is the Centre of all my Reflections. At my Age, you will find the Comfort of aſcribing to Providence, the Glory of the Succeſs we meet with.

LETTER XCIV.

To ——

WHY will you not write to me? You have now more Time than ever: You are at a Diſtance from Court, and from your Friends: Time lies heavy upon your Hands. Once more then, why don't you write? I ſhall give you the Account of a little Journey I lately made, merely for the Sake of Health, which, after all, is far from being confirmed. But I am no way uneaſy at it, for ſpeaking of you to Monſieur *Sanguin*, he promiſes to make us both live to ſix Score. He does Wonders here, but, with all his Skill, he can't ſecure me from a Relapſe, againſt which *Paris* alone can ſupply him with a Remedy. I ſhall be there by *St. Martin*'s Day; and we will go together to Madame *de Breuillac*'s. I have ſeen the Chevalier *de Meré*, to whom you are almoſt as much obliged as I myſelf am. He has made very honourable mention of you in a

Work

Work he is about to publiſh, which will laſt as long as the World. You'll think I have done enough for you; but I think very little of having juſt ſecured both your Life and your Glory. I have ſomething more in ſtore for you, and if you ſhould not like it, I will be revenged of your Silence, by over-whelming you with the Fruits of my provincial Retirement. One of my Friends has made a Diſcovery in a Book that is well known: 'Tis a Prophecy applicable only to the King, and to the preſent Reign: It very clearly deſcribes the Civil Wars; the Conqueſt of *Holland*, and a thouſand ſurprizing Events; which you will not believe, till you have ſeen them, and which yet you will ſee, and after all, not believe. The Book was printed a hundred Years ago. There is an Anſwer to the Objection you were going to ſtart. The Author ſpeaks *Latin*; therefore I have tranſlated the Paſſage for you, Word for Word. "I muſt here inſert, to oblige "the Reader, a Prophecy I extracted from a "very ancient Manuſcript, found, &c." *There will ariſe a King of the Nation of the moſt illuſtrious Lilly, having a ſpacious Forehead, high Eyebrows, large and piercing Eyes, and an aquiline Noſe. He will aſſemble a great Army; he will deſtroy all the Tyrants of his Kingdom; he will oblige them to lurk in Mountains and Caverns, to avoid his Preſence; for Juſtice will walk Hand in Hand*

with

with him, as a Bridegroom with his Bride. He will make War till the Forty-third Year of his Reign, during which he will ſubdue the Inhabitants of the Iſlands and the Marſhes, (the Latin *Word is* Inſulanos) *the* Spaniards *and the* Italians. *He will at laſt extend his Conqueſts into* Greece, Turky, *and even farther.* I have abridged the Concluſion; the reſt is Word for Word. I have ſhewn it to Monſieur *de Babeſſieres.* You will ſee him at *Paris.* You have now wherewith to pay your Court; and this Way of doing it is ſingular enough to come to you from the Hands of Monſieur *d'Aubigny*'s Grand-daughter. You know my Family has been for a long time fertile in Conjurers *. If the War with which you are threatened, afflicts you, the Accompliſhment of this Prophecy will give your Comfort.

LETTER XCV.

To the Marchioneſs de Querjean.

December 26.

OF all the Letters I received on the Honour the King has done me, yours has been moſt admired. It immediately put me in Mind of that admirable Stile, which uſed to charm me

* See Madame *de Maintenon*'s Memoirs.

in

in the *Rue de Tournelles*. We had known each other for ſome Years before, but our Intimacy was then at its Height; a Period too precious for me ever to forget. Let me hear from you, I beſeech you. Be ſolicitous only to tell me the Truth, however diſagreeable what you will hear of me may appear. I muſt know every thing, the very Moment; the Perſons, the Intention, the Tone, the Geſtures. Let me know alſo what you yourſelf have to ſay. Are they the *Janſeniſts* whom you call *The Devout?* I am not upon good Terms with them: The Cabal they form is conſiderable. The Praiſes I receive from its Members, indeed, prove thoſe who give them, to be more attached to Truth, than blinded by Party Zeal.

LETTER XCVI.

To the ſame.

January 6, 1706.

YOU have a Mind that I ſhould lecture your Nuns, and I obey you with Simplicity; but beg you would not ſhew my Letters; People would be apt to laugh. I am much pleaſed with the Viſit you made me on New-Year's Day. If you ſee any thing amiſs in my Letter to the Community, burn it, and I will write another.

To

To the Ladies of the Abbey.

" YOUR Friendſhip, Ladies, gives me the
" greateſt Pleaſure, and authorizes me to
" addreſs you with the ſame Liberty I ſpeak to
" the Ladies of *St. Cyr*. Methinks that my be-
" ing the Mother of your Abbeſs gives me a
" Right to conſider you as my Daughters. I
" know 'tis impoſſible to maintain exact Diſci-
" pline in a Convent deſtitute of temporal Sup-
" port, and that in your preſſing Wants you
" muſt have Recourſe to your Relations for ſuch
" Things as the Houſe cannot ſupply you with.
" What a dreadful Account here is for thoſe
" who occaſioned this Deficiency, and ſquan-
" dered the Portions of the Nuns! They are
" anſwerable for all the Miſchiefs cauſed by
" ſuch Miſmanagement. I ſhall aſſiſt you to
" eſtabliſh that Regularity from which Want
" perhaps has obliged you to deviate. I be-
" ſeech the Almighty to give you his Spirit, and
" to guard you againſt that which reigns in ſome
" Abbeys, a Taſte for the World; the Happi-
" neſs of which they envy becauſe they know
" it not; againſt the Deſire of being viſited;
" which the World itſelf laughs at, for corrupt
" as it is, it is equally ſevere; againſt an Eager-
" neſs of becoming rich and powerful, ſo oppo-

" ſite

" ſite to your Vow of Poverty; againſt the Va-
" nity of glorying in your Birth, and in the
" Wealth of your Relations; againſt the Curio-
" ſity of knowing every thing, and of knowing
" it in order to make a Figure in the Parlours,
" which Nuns ſhould abhor, as the Cauſe of all
" the Diſorder that happens in Convents;
" againſt the Pleaſure of making and receiving
" Preſents, a Commerce forbidden to thoſe
" who are dead to the World, if their Renun-
" ciation of it is any thing more than an idle
" Ceremony. Theſe are the Bleſſings, Ladies,
" which I beſeech the Almighty to pour down
" upon you, in hopes you will beſeech his
" Goodneſs to grant me likewiſe thoſe you think
" I may ſtand in Need of. I pray, moreover,
" that you may approve yourſelf the worthy
" Daughters of your holy Founders; that you
" may be the Comfort and the Joy of your Ab-
" beſs; that you may aſſiſt her to re-eſtabliſh
" your Houſe; that you may all form but one
" Heart and one Soul; that you may find your
" Pleaſures among yourſelves; that your Recre-
" ations be ſimple and innocent; that you may
" hate the World as much as our Saviour hated
" it; that you may eſteem nothing but Piety;
" that you may believe me to be as much as I
" really am *Your &c.*

LETTER

LETTER XCVII.

To the same.

January 15.

YEsterday, Madam, I received your Letter of the 13th, in which are many Things I dislike. Two Pages are filled with Praises, which should have been entirely omitted. You shew the Letters I write to your Community. With Simplicity I comply with what you require, in order to assist you; and you send my Letter to Cardinal *de Noailles*, and permit it to be handed about in your Convents. I'm not sorry to find you so little acquainted with the World as not to know you make me appear extremely ridiculous; but I am very sorry you don't entirely keep to yourself Things that I do solely with that Intent.

I am of Opinion, that a Convent may purchase in a Lottery, but that a Nun cannot. I have bought in for you. Consult Abbé *Brunet*. I can't as yet make use of my Hand to write to you, but you will not complain of my Secretary *.

LETTER

* This Letter is in the Hand-writing of the Dutchess of *Burgundy*, who, in order to form her Style, was always ready to assist Madame *de Maintenon*.

LETTER XCVIII.

To the same.

February 5, 1706.

IT is true, Madam, that I was quite angry. I called to you for Mademoiſelle *d'Aumale*, in ſo preſſing a manner, and at the ſame Time had ſo great Occaſion for her Aſſiſtance, that I imagined you ought to have complied with my Requeſt. She aſſures me you did not heſitate a Minute after you received my firſt Letter, but indeed I can hardly believe her, when ſhe ſpeaks of you. You muſt have ſeen that I ſuſpected you of pretending not to have received my Letters. I ſhould take it very ill you had Recourſe to ſuch Shifts. Don't expect that any of your Faults ſhould eſcape my Notice, for the Work of your Perfection is ſo forward, that I long to contribute to its Accompliſhment. The Account Mademoiſelle *d'Aumale* gives me of your Nuns, has inſpired me with the tendereſt Regard for them. People can't be ill-diſpoſed, who ſo rea-

tenon in this Capacity. Madame *de Maintenon* having one Day given the Preference to Mademoiſelle *d'Aumale*, the Princeſs ſaid. "Is not *Adelaide* of "*Savoy*, a Woman of Conſequence enough to ſerve "you?"

dily

dily embrace what is good. You would be very ungrateful, Madam, if you neglected to thank God for what he has done for you! There are many Houſes in which ſo much could not be effected in ten Years. I think you ought to drive away the only evil Spirit that ſtill haunts you. What Mademoiſelle *d'Aumale* told me of the Attachment our Girls of *St. Cyr* ſhewed to you, is the very Thing I feared, when I ſaw them ſo ready to ſet out for your Houſe. They would be very unhappy to become Nuns for your Sake. You may fail them in many Reſpects; omit nothing therefore to raiſe their Hearts to God, who alone never fails us.

LETTER XCIX.

To the ſame.

February 23, 1706.

THIS Fondneſs for my Writing is a Weakneſs common to all the Ladies brought up at *St. Cyr*; but they muſt accuſtom themſelves to do without it; and methinks you like my Secretary well enough to put up with what I may write to you by her Hand. As for me, I write with great Difficulty, yet hope I ſhall be now and then able to do it. I ſuſpected you of impoſing upon me. I am now glad to find I was miſ-

taken.

taken. Tho' you are not very old, I believe you are ſufficiently acquainted with the Nature of ſpiritual Matters to know, that 'tis not in the reliſh for Devotion that the Solidity of it conſiſts. As long as you are what you ought to be, you will certainly be very agreeable to God, and you know it better than I can tell you. You will often have Occaſion to comfort Nuns upon that Head. We ſhould be all of us extremely unhappy if our Salvation depended on a ſenſible Fervour, which 'tis not in our Power to command.

Monſieur *de Chamillard* has juſt ſent me Word, that I ſhall receive, next *Monday*, the ſeven Thouſand Livres I aſked of him, for you. In whoſe Hands do you chuſe I ſhould place it? Make good Uſe of this Sum; you may not probably receive a greater. Conſider well what Steps you take to procure Aſſiſtance, for fear of engaging in any thing above your Strength, or any ways unwarrantable. 'Twas with this View I aſked Mr. *Chamillard* very frankly for this Money, and 'tis the firſt Time I attempted any thing of the kind ſince I came to Court. But I thought I did a very good thing in helping you to re-eſtabliſh your Houſe. I don't tell you this to appear the better entitled to your Thanks, but to let you ſee how hard it is to procure any

Aſſiſtance

Assistance for you, and that this is the last you are to expect from me. For the future I shall do no more than pay very punctually the Pensions of my Girls, the Number of whom will soon be considerable, if Mademoiselle *d'Aumale* continues to go on as she has begun; for she thinks of nothing but of decoying them from *St. Cyr.*

When I spoke to you of your Recreations, I thought that all your Nuns amused themselves together. You must not force them to do so; but be persuaded it would be by far the most regular and advantageous manner. If I have done any Good at *St. Cyr*, it must be all attributed to my Assiduity to assist at their Recreations. 'Tis then that a Superior may expect, by her Complaisance, to gain the Love of her Nuns; 'tis then she may expect to get acquainted with their Tempers, and to cheer up their Spirits; 'tis then she may occasionally drop short Maxims, that may make deeper Impressions than studied Exhortations; 'tis this that serves to unite a Superior with her Nuns; 'tis this that maintains a Harmony between all the Members of a House; 'tis this that prevents Partialities, seperate Conversations, dangerous and indiscreet Confidences, and Murmurings that are still more dangerous. Nuns that have two Hours a Day to unbend their Minds, have no great Temptation to wish

for

for more Amuſement. And how many Virtues may not a Superior find an Opportunity of practiſing there, on Account of the Contradictions ſhe is liable to meet with.

LETTER C.

To the Marquis de Langallerie.

THE King has put you on the Liſt of Maréchals of his Camps and Armies, and you will receive your Commiſſion from Monſieur *de Catinat*, who ſets out immediately to take upon him the Command of the Troops in *Piedmont*. You will now no longer have any Occaſion for what you call my Protection; the King himſelf for the future, will take Care of your Fortune. Let all your Thanks for this Succeſs be given to God; and conſider that, about four Years ſince, you were no more than a Captain, and that too without the leaſt Hopes of Promotion. I am very glad to hear that you are pleaſed with Monſieur *d'Aubigny*, who, I reckon, will not be diſpleaſed at the Turn that your Affairs and his own have lately taken. Loſe no Opportunity of diſtinguiſhing yourſelf. Your Services will be taken Notice of; and there will not be wanting Friends to improve them to your Advantage.

'Tis

'Tis with great Reluctance I intermeddle in the Diſpoſal of Poſts and Places; yet I accept the Offer you make me in regard to your Regiment, and I accept of it with the greater Pleaſure, as I hope you will not be againſt marrying, provided the Wife whoſe Loſs you now regret, has not rendered you indifferent to the reſt of her Sex. Little *Simiane* ſhall take *your* Regiment, and you *his* Mother *. You will find in her, Birth, Beauty, Youth, and a competent Fortune. This laſt Article think the leaſt about. Let me know your Sentiments without Ceremony or Diſguiſe.

LETTER CI.

To Madame de Brinon.

HAD Mademoiſelle *de* .... ſpent ten Years of her Life in my Service, I could not have rewarded her better, than by giving her a Gentleman who is rich, beloved and eſteemed. Inſtruct her well how ſhe may make herſelf agreeable in Point of Temper, for, as to any thing elſe, ſhe is prudent, modeſt, pious; in fine, a very good Girl. Could ſhe but prevail on her-

* Madame *de Langallerie*, was afterwards Miſtreſs to the Landgrave of *Heſſe-Caſſel*.

ſelf to behave with more Mildneſs, and get the better of her too great Inclination for Expence, ſhe might promiſe herſelf the Adorations of her Family. I am thoroughly convinced of her Regard for me, and that, if I required it, ſhe would readily ſacrifice to me the Match I propoſe, and even a more advantageous one. On my Side I have the greateſt Affection for her; but ſhe has neither the Age nor the Temper requiſite for the Character in which I ſhould want her. I muſt have a Perſon that will think more of doing my Buſineſs than of making her own Fortune, or taking her Pleaſures. Beſides, we muſt live at Court with Perſons of all Diſpoſitions, and often with many of the worſt. Mademoiſelle *de* .... is in great Favour with the Counteſſes *. Her Huſband is gone to *Rouen*, to be reinſtated in an Employment; that it may not appear to be one of the Conditions of his Marriage. I gave my Conſent to his taking this Step, and took his Word for his Compliance. Mademoiſelle *de* .... happening to be with me the other Day at a Window of my Apartment at *Marli*, from which there is a Proſpect of the fine Gardens belonging to that Caſtle, I ſaid to her, " A ſingle Walk in the Gardens of *de*

* Relations and Intimates of Madame *de Maintenon*.

" *Roſai*

" *Roſai* will ſome time hence give you more " Pleaſure than all you now ſee." She very bluntly anſwered, 'I am very far from thinking 'ſo.' I took no Notice of her Anſwer, but ſhe behaves as if ſhe was worth twenty Thouſand Livres a Year, and as if I wanted to marry her to a beggar; whereas, between you and me, ſhe is far from being a proper Match for him, in whatever Light we conſider her †.

LETTER CII.

To Madame de Brinon.

I Aſſure you, Madam, I am greatly concerned at Madame *de Montbas*' Condition, I ſhall loſe no Opportunity of ſolliciting the King in her Favour, and if ſhe comes here, I will endeavour to convince her how much I have her Intereſt at Heart. 'Tis no eaſy Matter to get Acceſs to me: I have more Affairs upon my Hands than ever; frequent Journeys to *Marli* throw me behind-hand in my Buſineſs. At *St. Cyr* alone there is enough to employ me, had I nothing elſe to think of. We are about to eſtabliſh Miſſionaries there. We have already a Biſhop, and a pious one. We muſt build

† We muſt except Madame *de Maintenon*'s Intereſt.

Apart-

Apartments for theſe Miſſionaries, and have obtained the Pope's Conſent for that Purpoſe. Judge then, if I am not well taken up, independant of the Attention requiſite to the Buſineſs within Doors. I have given your Letters to the Canoneſs, who is more devout, more abſent, more lovely, more thoughtleſs than ever. Mademoiſelle *d'Aubigny* is extremely good, and much improved in every Reſpect. She is not only well inſtructed in the Duties of Religion, but has a due Senſe of her Obligation to comply with them. You have now had, Madam, all the News *St. Cyr* can ſupply; that of *Verſailles* is excellent. The King's Health and Holineſs are daily increaſing. Piety is come greatly into Faſhion. God grant it may take Root in the Hearts of all thoſe, who at preſent only make a Shew of it to pleaſe us! We ſhall ſoon take an eight-Days-Trip to *Compeigne*. I wiſh I could excuſe myſelf from going, but I am every Day informed, by a great Number of Saints, who viſit us from time to time, that we muſt renounce our own Will, and chearfully obey the Almighty's. Mademoiſelle *de Marſilly* would have it, that *St. Cyr* is at laſt come into Vogue. You, who fixed her there, cannot but know this Event is of a much earlier Date. I ſhall never depart from theſe Senti-

ments of Love and Eſteem I ever entertained for you. I have made too ſlight mention of our Biſhop, conſidering how well you know him: The King had never ſeen his Face: Not a ſingle Soul here knew even his Name; yet his Nomination is univerſally approved of by People of Merit. Himſelf alone is really concerned at it; and this Elevation has only ſerved to increaſe his Humility.

LETTER CIII.

To Madame de Brinon.

HAS Madame *de Cantelue* left off viſiting the Chancellor? I ſhall be very glad to ſee her, whenever ſhe pleaſes. You know my Taſte, Madam, and the Eſteem I have for her. To oblige you alone, I would undertake Things of more Difficulty. Since the World is ſo far intoxicated with Favour, as to value nothing but what carries the Marks of it*, I wiſh every Ac-

* By conſulting the Memoirs of Madame *de Maintenon*, the Reader will find how much even the Appearance of this Lady's Favour was valued; and be informed of a pleaſant Stratagem made uſe of by a certain Lady, to procure herſelf the Happineſs of being thought to have a Share in Madame *de Maintenon*'s good Graces.

tion and Word of mine might prove of Service to ſome one or other. I can give your Friend but a Moment; nor is it requiſite ſhe ſhould have more: Appearances alone will anſwer her Purpoſe. After all, it muſt be allowed a Happineſs to be able to do Good, by juſt expreſſing an Inclination to do it. Monſieur and Madame *de Pontchartrain* are People of Merit. Our new Novice is now as eaſy in her Mind, as you have known her otherwiſe. Her Vivacity is abated, and we ſhall make of her one of the moſt amiable Saints in the whole World. She has been well conducted by the Biſhop of *Chartres*. Adieu, my dear. My Letter is ſhort, but you would not be angry with me for it, did you know where I wr.te it.

LETTER CIV.

To Maréchal de Teſſé.

St. Cyr, February 10, 1706.

'TIS impoſſible Monſieur *le Maréchal*, that you ſhould ſeriouſly aſpire to be forgot. You are on the Stage, appearing in a great Character; and you appear in it with extraordinary Talents; all *Europe* is intereſted in your Behaviour, and has its Eyes fixed upon you. It is certain that the Affairs intruſted to your Care,

have a moſt diſagreeable Aſpect; but it is equally certain that you will exert yourſelf, that you will not be judged of by Events, and that let what will happen, your Zeal will be remember'd. I know Madame *des Urſins* cannot be more at her Eaſe than you are yourſelf; and I envy the Place of the Favourite as little as I do that of the Ambaſſador. A ſtrict Union can alone make you happy. You all give the ſame Account nearly, and thereby ſave the King the Trouble he formerly uſed to have to diſtinguiſh Truth from Falſehood. This Circumſtance alone is ſome Comfort, and tho' Things are in ſo bad a Way, we expect great Matters from your Capacity, and Readineſs to find out proper Expedients. We have not ſeen Madame *de Maulevrier* this long time paſt; 'tis a Loſs for herſelf as well as for us. I have received a Letter from Abbé *de Teſſé*, worthy of the Son of Politeneſs himſelf; and was glad to hear of your eldeſt Son's Marriage. I don't know, if People in *Spain* give out, as they do in other Countries, that the King's Health is quite gone; I can aſſure you, he never was better, and that he has not the leaſt Complaint. I don't tell you this to anſwer any political Purpoſe, but merely becauſe I know you to have a great Affection for him. Our Princeſs grows every Day more and more lovely, and

and would be perfect in every Reſpect, were it not for Lanſquenet *. As to my Health it is gone: I have laboured under a ſlight Fever theſe four Years paſt, almoſt without the leaſt Reſpite, and am grown ſo weak, that I am unable to write. I never am at a Loſs for Secretaries at *St. Cyr*, tho' this Time am afraid I have made Choice of a very bad one. Be perſuaded Monſieur *le Maréchal*, that, let my Condition be what it will, my Regard for you will be unalterable.

LETTER CV.

To the Maréchal de Chateau-Renaud.

I Hope, Monſieur *le Maréchal*, that you will not be diſpleaſed at my requeſting the Favour of you to ſee Juſtice done to a Gentleman of *Britanny*, called Monſieur *Duval-Pinard*. I really think he has been injured. Some Months ago he was elected Captain of the Militia of his Pariſh, and his Election was approved of by the Count *de Toulouſe*, who gave him Orders to pre-

* 'Tis pleaſant to obſerve, in the Memoirs we have ſo frequently cited, that ſhe uſed to borrow Money upon her Jewels, to extricate this Princeſs from the Difficulties into which her Love of Lanſquenet not unfrequently involved her.

ſent himſelf to you, in order to obtain your Approbation, which you readily ſhewed, by letting him know, that he had nothing to do but to return to his Pariſh, in order to be received there, and exerciſe his Functions. It appears that, on this Occaſion, he failed in ſome Part of the Ceremony due to Monſieur *Lezerdot du Parc*, who acts there as Captain-General, and by whom he ſhould have been inſtalled: But I can't help thinking that this little Failure of Reſpect has been reſented with too much Severity; Monſieur *Lezerdot* having caballed with the Pariſh-Prieſt to diſpoſſeſs Monſieur *Duval*, and to proceed to another Election, which is irregular, and of which the Inhabitants themſelves complain. When I applied for Juſtice to the Count *de Toulouſe*, I was informed, Sir, that Recourſe muſt be had to you, to whom the Deciſion of Things of this Sort belong, as Commander in Chief in that Province. I don't know any one that I would rather apply to than yourſelf, not only to obtain Juſtice, but Favour for the Gentleman in Queſtion, in caſe he wanted any. But methinks that, as he was once elected and inſtalled, it would be offering him a great Indignity, and ruining him in the Eyes of his Province, to ſtrip him of his Employment; and without his having done any thing to deſerve ſo ſevere a Treat-

a Treatment. A Gentleman's Honour is, in my Opinion, ſomething ſo very delicate, that I could not refuſe my Protection. I hope, therefore, you will immediately give Orders to reinſtate him; and tho' your doing ſo will be nothing more than an Act of Juſtice, I ſhall conſider it as a Favour done to me; and as a Mark of your Friendſhip, which I ſhall always depend upon.

LETTER CVI.

To the ſame.

March 4, 1706.

YOU will find me ſtill more obſtinate in Regard to your receiving as Penſioners, grown-up-Girls. I ſhould be better pleaſed that half your Houſe was empty, than that you filled it with dangerous Members; and theſe great Girls are ſo dangerous that the Biſhops are obliged to forbid the Convents, without Exception, to take them in. I don't mean Women who are old enough to think ſeriouſly of retiring from the World. As to thoſe who are fond of Dreſs, who frequent the Parlours, who find the Time heavy, who receive Viſits from the Nuns, no Proſpect of Intereſt ſhould induce you to admit them.

It would be both unjuſt and indiſcreet of you to ſell the Contracts of your Nuns in order to pay the Debts of your Convent; unjuſt by expoſing them to the Danger of wanting every thing, and of being obliged to ſeek for Shelter among their Relations, in caſe your Houſe ſhould happen to fall to Decay; indiſcreet by not deriving from their Portions an Income, which is the real Property of every Nun in particular, and of all of them in general. I know that ſome Convents make no Scruple of ſuch Sales, and that it is become a Proverb, *That they every Year eat one or two of their Nuns.* But Jeſts will not paſs at the Day of Judgment; and theſe are Sins which I intended to mention among the Heads of Self-examination for Nuns, which I had Thoughts of collecting. 'Tis not enough, my dear Daughter, to be upright in our Diſcourſe, we muſt aim at being ſo in all our Actions, and not ſuffer ourſelves to be hurried away by the Torrent of bad Cuſtoms, which will never excuſe us in the Sight of God.

I am not better qualified to judge of Inclinations, than of Vocations to a religious Life; but am of Opinion Things ſhould be done leiſurely, and without Compulſion. You labour too much, and ſleep too little. Monſieur *Façon* can preſcribe nothing in ſuch a Caſe. How can you poſſibly

be

be ſo preſſing for my Hand-writing, at the Expence of my Health? Folly like this would be pardonable in one of the young Ladies of *St. Cyr*, but in a venerable Abbeſs!—— However, I indulge you with ſome of this favourite Writing, that I may tell you how tenderly I love you. Incloſed is a Letter,

For Mademoiſelle de Champlebon.

" SINCE God has been pleaſed to reſtore
" you your Health at *Gomer-Fontaines*, and
" at the ſame Time to inſpire you with a De-
" ſire of remaining there, 'tis *there* moſt pro-
" bably, my dear Child, he would have you
" give yourſelf up to him. Think well upon
" it however, before you engage, and if your
" Vocation continues, offer your Sacrifice; but
" let it, I beſeech you, be without Reſerve.
" Think not of it, (like too many among the
" Nuns) as of an empty Ceremony. Die to
" the World. Take it not up at the Parlour,
" after having renounced it at the Grate. Hate
" it as the Enemy of J. C. It already ſtands
" condemned on Account of its Scandals. De-
" ſpiſe its Vanities and its Maxims, and endea-
" vour on every Occaſion to form your Judg-
" ment by the Rules of the Goſpel. Nuns are

" too apt to think the World happy; they doat " on its Pomps, its Magnificence, its Trap- " pings; whilſt the World itſelf, ſcandalized at " ſuch Want of Piety, is ſurprized to find it " can ſtill have Charms."

LETTER CVII.

To the ſame.

May 25, 1706.

MADAME *de Barneval*, Mother to the two little *Iriſh* Girls I ſent you, is deſirous alſo of retiring into your Houſe. She is a Woman of Quality both by Birth and Marriage. She doats on Convents, and has been always uſed to live in them, during her Huſband's Abſence with the Army. She now refuſes every other Offer that has been made her. She is young, well-made, and greatly reſpected at the Court of *England*. She is as yet a Stranger to Want; for 'tis from very eaſy Circumſtances that ſhe ſees herſelf all at once plunging into the greateſt Indigence. The moſt ſhe can afford to pay is four Hundred Livres a Year * for herſelf and a Servant, which ſhe can't as yet do without. Con-

* This Penſion was paid by Madame *de Maintenon*.

ſider

ſider, Madam, what you can do upon this Occaſion, and be perſuaded 'tis indifferent to me whether you receive her or not; but, if you receive her, be particular in mentioning all the Conditions of Agreement; which after all need not be indiſſoluble.

Let your Conduct be upright, my dear Abbeſs; do nothing to deſerve Cenſure; and then ſuffer with Patience the Reproaches of Scandal. Truth will not long bear to be ſtifled.

I am not offended with you for ſpeaking in Favour of Monſieur *Beaulieu*; but I can't ſerve him. I have taken a Reſolution never to aſk for a Benefice; indeed were I to aſk for this, I ſhould not obtain it. 'Tis your holy Cardinal's Buſineſs to apply in his Favour, or to give him one himſelf. Let every one mind his own Buſineſs.

The Verſes compoſed againſt you, Madam, are really to your Honour. Happy are thoſe who ſuffer for the Sake of Juſtice.

I am very ſorry for the Diſorder that prevails in your Houſe, tho' no way ſurprized at it. Nothing but the greateſt Regularity can get the better of it, and prevent the like for the future; and this ſhould be the conſtant Employment of your Life. Don't be ready to credit every Report; firſt examine them well; and, once arrived

rived at a Certainty, remove every Occaſion of Miſchief. If you act ſteadily in this Reſpect, if you pray for your Nuns, if they can diſcover nothing in you but Patience and Mildneſs, they muſt be very perverſe indeed, if they return not to their Duty. But God alone knows the Time when that is to happen.

I have ſeldom received People from the Hands of Saints, that I had not Reaſon to repent of it. I make no Doubt of Mademoiſelle *de* . . . . 's Poverty, and it is our Duty to relieve her.

It's not amiſs that a Superior ſhould be a little ſuſpicious, provided ſhe herſelf is ſenſible of being ſo, and can hinder others from perceiving it. You can't have too watchful an Eye over your Community: But I have always found that the beſt Way of eſtabliſhing and maintaining Regularity in Convents, is by having nothing at all to ſay to Men, let them be what they will. Lawyers, Eccleſiaſticks, Servants, Peaſants, the young, the old, the well-made, and the ill-made, Maſters, Scholars, all may be dangerous, and you can never uſe too much Precaution. Oppoſe reſolutely the Admittance of People from abroad into your Houſe; make the Parlours as diſagreeable as you can; read all the Letters that go in or out. You are in the Right to think there is ſomething of Self-love in wiſhing to ſee your

Work

Work perfect; that it never will be ſo, you may be certain; as alſo that God requires nothing more from you than your earneſt Endeavours. I pity you greatly for loſing Mademoiſelle *d'Aumale*. You call to me for a Girl of her Temper and good Senſe: If you know ſuch another, ſend her to me at any rate; I will make of her a tolerable Lady of *St. Lewis*.

LETTER CVIII.

To Madame de Montgon *.

Marly, Auguſt 10.

YOUR Letter, Madam, gives me great Pleaſure; and the preſent conveys to you my thankful Acknowledgments for it. If you think ſo very highly of my Eſteem, you cannot but be happy, for you are indeed in the Poſſeſſion of it; nay, and to a greater Degree than one of your Age may appear to be intitled. I may be guilty of Exceſs in this reſpect, but what we ſee in our younger Days, ſhould make us admire thoſe who eſcape the Influence of ſuch bad Examples. Continue your Endeavours, my dear Daughter, to confirm your Reputation more

* Under the Direction of Madame *de Maintenon*, and afterwards Lady of the Palace to one of the Princeſſes.

and

and more; 'tis a Treaſure you will one Day be overjoyed to have acquired, and what nothing can reſtore to you, ſhould you have the Misfortune to loſe it. Enjoy the Happineſs of being in a Family full of Honour and Virtue. You do well to admire your Children, for they are indeed worthy of your Admiration. Acquaint me with ſome of their little Actions and Sayings. I love you well enough to liſten with high Pleaſure to any thing you ſhall have to ſay on that Head. Should you diſcover your Foible, how very pardonable an one! Their Grand-mother of this Country is now called * *Agathemeter*. 'Tis a *Greek* Name given her at *Marli*. Call her ſo in your firſt Letter; the Joke will do very well. I embrace you, my dear Daughter. Aſſure all the *Montgons*, that I reſpect you not the leſs for taking a Liberty with you; and remember my Compliments to your Father-in-law. I dare not ſay any thing to your Mother-in-law, as I have not the Honour of being known to her; tho' I flatter myſelf, I muſt have That of knowing her, from all you tell me, *&c.*

* Signifying *Good Mother*. Probably Madame *de Maintenon* means herſelf, who was indeed a Mother to all the young Ladies ſhe took Care of. See her Memoirs.

LETTER

LETTER CIX.

To Madame de Montgon.

September 16.

'TIS true, my dear Daughter, that you are well ſettled, and that your Joy on the Occaſion would be much greater, did you know the King's Goodneſs in contributing to your Happineſs; but I need not excite you to Gratitude; I rather deſire you ſhould look higher. You owe all your Happineſs to God; 'tis him that fixes you with a young Princeſs who is one Day to fill a Throne. You are with Women who are both prudent and pious; and no Doubt he requires you ſhould follow their Example, and will afford you Grace for that Purpoſe. I know what Good Impreſſions have been made on your Heart, and that nothing hinders you but human Reſpect. You muſt take Courage. You are now, in a manner, freed from every Temptation to Remiſneſs. Think ſeriouſly of complying with your Duty at Court, which, joined to your Family Concerns, will be enough to take up all your Time. Begin to ſerve God with that worthy Mother-in-law, whoſe Virtues you ſo much admire; and return to us ſo altered, that you may not be diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of

the

the young Ladies belonging to your Princeſs. Forgive this Liberty of preaching to you; impute it to the Tenderneſs I have for you, the Senſe of which you are always pleaſed to teſtify. The Duke of *Maine* could not anſwer you. Have ſome Indulgence for your *quondam* little Brother. You may come back when you pleaſe. We ſhall not return from *Fontainebleau* till the 8th or 10th of *November*, unleſs any thing happen that I do not at preſent foreſee, *&c.*

LETTER CX.

To the ſame.

November 23, 1706.

I Cannot bear that Tradeſmen ſhould be deſpiſed when they have Virtues to recommend them. We are not governed here by ſuch Maxims, and Things, we find, go the better for it.

Continue your Endeavours, my dear Daughter, to eſtabliſh in your Convent a good Spirit; the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Diſintereſtedneſs, the Spirit of Uprightneſs, the Spirit of Solitude, the Spirit of Obedience, the Spirit of Permanence, the Spirit of every thing that is commendable. Oh! how the Convents where

ſuch

ſuch a Spirit does not prevail, are to be pitied for their Ignorance of the Goſpel! They love the World, they admire it, they think it happy, they luſt after its Riches. They eſteem Grandeur; they deſpiſe the Poor. Does it become Nuns to be aſhamed of ſeeing their Relations in a mean Dreſs; or, to pride themſelves in being viſited by them in gaudy Apparel; to be anxious about hearing of Faſhions; to be tranſported when the Royal Family happens to be the Topic, and never to mention a Word of God to the Seculars, who have Occaſion to enter the Houſe, or come to viſit them? Were I to examine the Conduct of Abbeſſes, I ſhould find equal Reaſon to deplore their Ignorance; but, Thanks be to God, you know your Obligation! If you will promiſe me to read *St. Francis de Sales* without being diſguſted at his obſolete Language, and to adopt his Spirit, I will ſend you his Works.

Is Mademoiſelle *de N*. . . . . mortified, or to expreſs it better, humbled at the Poverty of her Family? Don't the Ladies of *St. Cyr* give Proofs of Poverty, as well as of Nobility? And is it poſſible that Girls, who have Courage enough to ſacrifice themſelves to God, by the moſt ſolemn Vows, ſhould be afraid of owning themſelves poor in the Face of the whole World.

Whiſper

Whiſper your rich Tradeſmen's Daughters, that if Things were in their proper Order, they would be the Chamber-maids of theſe poor young Ladies of Quality; but, at the ſame time, tell your young Ladies of Quality, in the ſtrongeſt Terms, that they ought to kiſs with Joy the Feet of theſe Tradeſmen's Daughters, and that all are equal in the Sight of God.

You are very much to blame, my dear Daughter, for being ſo ready to let Seculars come into your Houſe. 'Tis one of the greateſt Miſchiefs: I ſhould never have done, did I once begin to enumerate them. *St. Cyr* owes all it's Regularity to my Care in depriving the Ladies of all manner of Communication with the World. They never ſpeak to any of the Court Ladies; nor do I ever loſe Sight of thoſe whoſe Viſits I receive there. The young Ladies of *St. Cyr* are priviledged by the King's Patent to diſpoſe of the Portion he gives them, and are not obliged to gain their Parents Conſent. Monſieur *de Voiſin* * was, a few Days ago, conſulted on this Head.

As to the Precautions requiſite for the Salvation of Souls, I believe they conſiſt in depriving them of every Opportunity of loſing themſelves.

* Temporal Director of *St. Lewis*. See Madame *de Maintenon*'s Memoirs.

'Tis

'Tis here we muſt cut to the quick. No Indulgence is allowable when Sin can be avoided. Is it not ſurprizing that theſe poor unthinking Creatures, whoſe Ruin you prevented, ſhould be greatly troubled at the Meaſures taken for their Good. But ſuch Meaſures muſt be ſweetened with Charity, ſo as to convince them of the Reality of your Affection for them, and your Readineſs to indulge them in every Thing that is indifferent.

The King has been informed of the Hand you had in the Buſineſs of *Argenſolles*. Nothing eſcapes him; but he regards you, I aſſure you, not the leſs.

You muſt examine if the Faults you apprehend are of Conſequence. I ſhould be better pleaſed ſome little Miſtakes were committed in an Employment, than that you did any thing to vex the old Nuns. But, on the other Hand, I had rather vex them than expoſe them to Faults, againſt that Regularity which you intend to eſtabliſh.

When a Nun ſeeks to pleaſe the Men, you cannot be too ſtrict in depriving her of every Opportunity of ſeeing them. Nothing but an entire Sequeſtration can cure this Diſeaſe. In other Reſpects you muſt not behave with Harſhneſs, or ever grieve any of them. You muſt often

ten ſpeak to them in private, tell them frankly what you remark that is amiſs in them, begin with the Failings that ſooneſt require being redreſſed, avoid mentioning every thing at once, ſhew no Surprize at their Faults, expreſs a great deal of Friendſhip for them, convince them that you are anſwerable for their Souls in the Sight of God, that you are ſorry to be obliged to give them any Uneaſineſs, that 'tis your earneſt Deſire to aſſiſt them in working their Salvation, and give them withal ſuch Demonſtration of your Affection, as may let them ſee you ſeek their Advantage in all the Reſtraints you lay them under. Airs of Authority make no impreſſion on the Heart: The Mildneſs of a Friend is by no means incompatible with the Steddineſs of an Abbeſs.

Your Nuns know not what they do, when they would have you liſten to the Propoſals of the Prince of *Conti*'s Receiver. Theſe People would fain make their Fortune thro' my Intereſt, but as I don't intend they ſhould, I ſhall never amuſe them with Hopes of obtaining it. Such a Proceedure is not conſiſtent with Honour or Juſtice. 'Tis not the Buſineſs of Convents to enter into Intrigues, but rather to deplore thoſe that are carried on in the World.

I am not ſurprized at your being ſo well ſatiſ-

fied

fied with Madame *de Barneval*. I ſcarce ever met with a more amiable Woman.

Adieu, Madam, I ſhall always tell you what I think, for I moſt ardently deſire you ſhould ſucceed in making yours a Model for other Houſes, and yourſelf a Pattern for other Abbeſſes.

LETTER CXI.

To the ſame.

January 3, 1707.

I Don't queſtion, my dear Abbeſs, the Sincerity of your Wiſhes, nor ought you to queſtion mine. Let us both think ſeriouſly on the great Buſineſs of our Sanctification, you, in order to edify the World, and thoſe retired from it; I, to appear before God whenever he may pleaſe to call me.

The Nuns of the Viſitation, who planted among us here the Spirit of Religion, and a Confidence in our Superiors, taught us likewiſe thoſe private Conferences, which have anſwered ſo well. I know 'tis not the Practice in moſt religious Houſes, where the giving up Accounts preſcribed to the Ladies of *St. Mary* is even conſidered as a moſt mortifying Obligation. 'Tis

not

not of this kind of methodical Conferences that I meant to ſpeak to you, when I adviſed you to viſit your Nuns in private. I would lay them under no Reſtraints, but would reſt ſatisfied with what they tell me of their own accord. You will never be able to conduct them to God otherwiſe than by the Confidence you may engage them to repoſe in you. You will never ſucceed in your Endeavours to eſtabliſh Regularity among them, but by treating them in the moſt affectionate manner. And how can you do all this without knowing them? How can you know them without ever ſeeing them in private? How can you expect to be beloved, if you do not perſuade them, that they are equally dear to you? How can you convince them of your Love, if you do not comfort the afflicted, ſympathize with the ſick, inſtruct the ſcrupulous, cheer the melancholy. All this will appear difficult to you, and it really is a difficult Taſk, but 'tis the only Way to lay a ſolid Foundation for good Government. The reſt is but a mere exterior Arrangement. I agree with you that 'tis a very diſagreeable Office; one muſt ſay a great many Things that appear quite needleſs; bear the Frowardneſs of ſome, and the Stupidity of others; and all this without loſing one's temper.

You

You cannot bear, you ſay, that People ſhould want Sincerity; but 'tis a Failing to be met with in Convents. In every State of Life thoſe who undertake to govern, ſhould know how to ſuffer. The Reſpect I propoſe your Nuns ſhould pay you in this holy manner, differs widely from that which a great many Abbeſſes require from theirs; but ſuch Abbeſſes muſt likewiſe expect to meet with a quite different Reward.

Your Endeavours to inſinuate yourſelf into the Hearts of your Nuns, in order to lead them to God, will be amply rewarded, tho' they ſhould not be crowned with Succeſs.

Your Houſe will never be governed as it ought to be, till you govern it entirely yourſelf. Your Confeſſor ſhould refer all your Nuns to you, except as to their ſins, and not intermeddle directly or indirectly with any thing elſe.

You are too ready, I think, to ſubmit to my Advice: I ſhould be better pleaſed you exerciſed your own Reaſon, and even diſputed a little. 'Tis not my Intention to tyrannize.

If your Confeſſor has Courage enough to look me in the Face, I hope he will accuſtom himſelf to me by Degrees. You ſay you ſpoke to the Nun in Queſtion, and that you will ſpeak to her once more; You would be too happy in gaining her over by a Repetition of twenty

Times.

Times. Arm yourself with Patience, if you have a Mind to do the Work of God. I embrace you most tenderly, and with you all our dear Daughters.

LETTER CXII.

To the same.

January 14, 1707.

I AM transported, Madam, for the Joy you felt at the Duke of *Britanny*'s Birth. Mine was allayed by the Death of two near Relations, and afterwards by that of Mademoiselle *de Montgon*, Daughter of Madame *d'Hudicour*, whom I tenderly loved, and whom I had in a manner brought up. The Lying-in of the Dutchess of *Burgundy*, my Affliction, and That of my Friends, with my usual Complaints, scarce left me a Moment's Leisure. This is the Reason why I did not write to our Daughters. People sometimes forget their Children, tho' ever so dear to them, to think of Strangers. Besides, I no longer write any Letters but when Necessity or the Prospect of some Advantage obliges me.

Piety is no better than Hypocrisy, when the Heart has not its Share in it. True interior Piety consists, I believe, in thinking of God, in our doing

doing every thing with the pureſt Intentions, in walking as in his Preſence. But take Care, my dear Abbeſs, not to make ſpiritual Babblers of our Daughters; nothing could be more uſeleſs or dangerous. Let them not read much; let them ſpeak with Caution on ſublime Subjects; let them obſerve their Rules; let them ſhun the World; let them work with their Hands. Theſe are the beſt Methods of eſtabliſhing Regularity in religious Houſes.

I ſhall loſe no Time in writing to Monſieur *de Courſon*, but am afraid Monſieur *d'Arnouville's* Sollicitation will have more Weight.

Never give an Anſwer to any Propoſal made you, till you have ſeriouſly deliberated on it. Aſk of yourſelf; is this Propoſal conſiſtent with the Regularity of my Houſe? If your Conſcience anſwers, no, let who will have made it, reject it directly. Yes, Madam, you ſhould not heſitate even to refuſe me, ſhould I require you to receive a Perſon that would not edify your Houſe. The ſpiritual Welfare of which is your firſt Duty.

This Digreſſion does not concern the Nun you are going to receive, ſince her Behaviour edifies you; it is by Way of Inſtruction to my Daughter, the Abbeſs, who often applies to me on that Head.

LETTER CXIII.

To the same.

February 11, 1707.

I Have just now had a pretty long Conference with your holy Confessor, with whom I am well satisfied. He was no way reserved in telling me his Sentiments, nor I in telling him mine: And I assure you there is already a proper Confidence established between us.

We spoke of the Harmony so requisite between Confessors and Superiors: 'Tis not possible a religious House should prosper without it.

I told him that, during the first Years of this Establishment, our Nuns were conducted by very holy regular Priests, who, by gaining the entire Confidence of their Penitents, left us no Opportunity of knowing them, and thereby deprived us of the Means of governing them; and accordingly Things went so ill, during that Period, that I often apprehended we should be under a Necessity of abandoning our Undertaking.

Our House has been what you now see it, from the Time we placed in the Confessional regular Priests, who refer their Penitents to the Superior, and to the Constitutions and Rules of the Order; reserving

reſerving to themſelves the Cognizance of nothing but Sins, without ever intermeddling with the general or particular Government of the Houſe. Our Confeſſors never ſpeak to their Penitents but in the Confeſſional, and even there neither of them can ſee the other. Our Nuns confeſs themſelves in as few Words as poſſible, for fear of hindering others, and when they have any thing to ſay that requires a longer hearing, they defer it to another Day; but nothing is ſaid but in the Confeſſional.

Our Confeſſors never concern themſelves with the Employments of our Nuns, and we never conſult but ſuch as we know to be People of Experience, and then only upon the Government of the Houſe, and in general Terms.

I am afraid your Nuns are not well enough fed. I know ſome Convents where the Superior ſtarves them, to celebrate the divine Office with greater Magnificence. The uſual Excuſe for ſuch a prepoſterous Practice is, that Nuns can live upon very little; but it muſt be conſidered that their Rules have already deprived them of Superfluities, and reduced them to bare Neceſſaries; ſo that any further Retrenchment cannot but exhauſt them, and of Courſe render them ſower and unhealthy.

Some Communities have obtained from the King a young Lady of *St. Lewis*, by Way of diſcharging a Debt they had contracted. Your Madame *Flavacourt* may perhaps obtain the ſame Favour, but ſhe muſt aſk it herſelf; neither you nor I muſt appear on the Occaſion. The King muſt not hear of your Name again. Will you be ſatisfied with this Letter, and own that you have enough of my Hand-writing.

You thank me too much for Trifles. 'Tis indeed uſing you like a Daughter, to ſend you ten *Louis*. I ſhall ſend you as much more to pay for weaving your Serges.

LETTER CXIV.

To the ſame.

April 3, 1707.

YOU now ſee how uſeful it is to have the Love of thoſe you are obliged to govern. 'Tis the only way to ſucceed. Where Mildneſs has failed, Harſhneſs will never anſwer.

I don't know what kind of Reſpect is paid to the Abbeſſes in your Order, but I know very well that you ought not to inſiſt upon any that is merely perſonal, nor require any particular Ceremony or Attention, nor conſider yourſelf as any way obliged to thoſe who may diſtinguiſh them-

themſelves in that Reſpect. Yet Superiority muſt have its Due, and I cannot ſufficiently admire with what Simplicity our Abbeſs recommends that Reſpect, Submiſſion, and Obedience, to which her Employment intitles her. She is now finiſhing her triennial Government by continual Inſtructions upon that Head, which ſufficiently prove, that it was not for herſelf ſhe laboured to eſtabliſh her Authority. *St. Auſtin* ſays, That a Superior ought to do nothing that may render her Authority contemptible. Walk uprightly, my dear Daughter, and eſtabliſh that Obedience which Inferiors owe their Superiors. Be neither aſhamed to recommend it, nor puffed up with receiving it. Give your Nuns an Example of it, by yielding it yourſelf to thoſe above you. The Word *reign* is certainly ridiculous. Your own good Senſe muſt tell you ſo. Baniſh all theſe Airs of Grandeur, which make Abbeſſes ridiculous in the Eyes of the World. One of them took it into her Head to have a Throne like that of the King of *Siam*, becauſe, forſooth, thoſe made uſe of by our Kings and Biſhops were not high enough for her. This is no Joke, I was told her Name.

Deſire your Nuns to complain to me, if your Avarice ſhould make Encroachments to their Prejudice.

I wish, with all my Heart, I could ſend you ſome of the young Ladies of *St. Cyr*, but they alledge Reaſons for being in Dread of Abbeſſes, which I cannot contradict. 'Tis true that of late, I can ſcarce be prevailed upon to diſpenſe with that Rule which obliges them to remain here till the Age of Twenty. My Death cannot be far of. I ſhould be under Apprehenſions for thoſe ſent away, and tho' ſuch Uneaſineſs might be groundleſs, I think it more prudent not to expoſe myſelf to it.

There is one Thing more, which I have not as yet ſpoke to you of: 'Tis about your little Favourite. You ſhould bring her up, as you do the reſt of your Girls, and even ſtrive to render her more ſhy, more modeſt, and more uſeful in your Houſe. She is not better born than them, nor is ſhe to be honoured on Account of her Siſter's Diſhonour *. 'Twere to be wiſhed you could make a good Nun of her, but 'tis not by bringing her up in Pride and Haughtineſs, you can expect to effect it. I know nothing in particular of your Behaviour to her; but I know there is no Education ſo bad as that which the Favourites or Nieces of Abbeſſes generally receive.

* The Siſter was Miſtreſs to the Duke of *Orleans*.

You are in the right, Madam, to thank me for dealing ſo plainly with you. No-body could have more Pleaſure in telling you agreeable Things; but my great Regard for you, the Honour of *St. Cyr*, and my earneſt Deſire to ſee an Abbeſs after God's Heart, oblige me to ſpeak to you in the manner I do.

Cardinal *de Noailles* and I are both very angry with you, for being ſick merely thro' your own Fault. You are too earneſt in doing Good, and in too great a Hurry: You labour too much; and all this can only ſerve to put you back.

What would you retrench from your Nuns, who ſing both Day and Night, and whoſe Blood and Temper would be ſowered by depriving them of Neceſſaries?

Who told you that little *de Levi*'s Mother, whom you never converſed with but for a few Hours, was a good Woman? She is not in a Condition to pay her Daughter's Penſion.

LETTER CXV.

To the ſame.

May 1, 1707.

GOD requires that you ſhould make your Mind eaſy, and fulfill the Obligations of your State, juſt as they preſent themſelves: You would deſtroy yourſelf to no Purpoſe, by endeavouring to go on at too great a Rate.

Your Letter is a Confeſſion, or rather a ſpiritual Account, given by a Penitent to her Director, but there is no Character I would not readily aſſume, to be of Service to you.

The Propoſal you make me concerning your Mother and your Siſter, may be either good or bad: Good, if they intend to forſake the World intirely; bad, if they have only taken a mere tranſitory Diſguſt to it. Take Notice that here, no one is to be benefited by their Retreat but themſelves, and that you would not have any Intereſt in receiving them, if they were not related to you. Now, you owe more to your Community than to any one elſe; you cannot in Conſcience trouble the Peace and Regularity of your Houſe, out of Affection to your Relations. People in the World form ſtrange Notions to themſelves of their Children's Abbeys. They conſi-

ſider

ſider them as their own, and the Abbeſſes have confirmed this Opinion, by diſpoſing of the Revenues of their Abbeys, or at leaſt ſome Part of them, in an arbitrary manner. But 'tis acting with great Injuſtice. I lately conſulted my *Saints* about it, and they confirmed me in the Opinion I ever had of ſuch a Proceeding.

If therefore your Mother cauſes any Confuſion in the eſtabliſhed Diſcipline of your Houſe, you muſt not keep her, howmuchſoever your Heart may ſuffer by it. This Heart ought to be dead to the World. Good Wiſhes are now the only Duties you owe your Mother: You owe your whole ſelf to the Obligations of a Nun, and an Abbeſs.

If your Mother is pious, edifying, fond of Retirement; if ſhe does not intermeddle with your Affairs; if ſhe does not concern herſelf about the Government of your Nuns; if ſhe neither forms Connections, nor Quarrels with any of them; if inſtead of a Taſte for the World ſhe inſpires them with a Love for their Vocation, and without lecturing them too; if your Siſters are uſeful in the Conduct of your temporal Affairs, but without pretending to Authority; if they form Connections with the Penſioners, merely to inſpire them with virtuous Sentiments; and if very diſcreet, they may receive them. But I tremble leaſt your Tenderneſs for them ſhould

prejudice you in their Favour; and your Duty, of Courſe, ſhould be ſacrificed, unknown even by yourſelf to your Affection. And then ſhould a Separation prove neceſſary! think well on it. Your Nuns will murmur. You know how they will be apt to ſpeak of thoſe from whom they have nothing to expect.

I will again lend you Mademoiſelle *d'Aumale*. She is a Girl of great Senſe, and formerly attached to me. I confide in her as much as I love her. She is fit for arduous as well as trifling Affairs. I ſhall ſuffer by loſing her: But you ſhall have her notwithſtanding.

There is very good News from *Spain*: Such another Advantage would reſtore Peace. Don't be tired, my dear Daughter, with praying for its Return. You did extremely well to require an Account of the Manner in which the Temporalities of your Houſe had been employed. There is no Need of Diſguiſe when our Intentions are upright. — What do you think of Mademoiſelle *de Tharſis*' Flight? I always forget her Name.

LETTER

LETTER CXVI.

To Mademoiſelle d'Aumale.

St. Cyr, June 4, 1707.

I AM very angry with our Abbeſs for being ſo tired with her Government. Does it become one that has but juſt ſet out, to complain of Fatigue? She now has conſtant Aſſiſtance. What then will become of her when I am dead? Cheer up her Spirits, this Deſpondency is the Conſequence of her Sickneſs. I would give any thing to be now at *Gomer-Fontaines*. I would be her Phyſician, for you know I ſtudied my Courſe under Monſieur *Fagon*, and that I pretend to have ſome Experience. Don't heſitate a Moment to turn away the Woman you mention: I ſend not to our dear Abbeſs any Penſioners to make her uneaſy. She would, as you ſay, be too happy if ſhe had none but Children to deal with; 'tis your grown-up Girls that ſpoil every thing. They are hard to be pleaſed; they always ſpend more than they give; they take Scandal at every thing the Nuns do, take upon them to judge of the Superior's Behaviour, run down the Convents, diſperſe abroad a thouſand ſcandalous, or ridiculous, and often falſe,

Stories,

Stories, and weaken the Nuns Vocation to a religious Life, by placing before their Eyes the Airs and Vanities of the World. I ſhould never have done, were I to repeat every thing I know of them. I paſs over their Miſbehaviour in other Reſpects, by which they ſo often bring Diſhonour on the Houſes where they live.

LETTER CXVII.

To Madame de la Viefville.

June 11, 1707.

YOU can't be happy while you expect Gratitude from Mankind; God intends you another kind of Reward. Labour for him, labour with him, labour like him. If you labour for him, you will be indifferent about the Approbation of your Nuns; if you labour with him, you will enjoy an interior Peace that no Diſappointments can diſturb; if you labour like him, you will labour with Strength and with Mildneſs, without Hurry, Uneaſineſs, or Impatience. In the Name of God, Madam, do not be in ſuch a Hurry. I have ſeen Nuns here of that Diſpoſition, who worried us all, and themſelves into the Bargain. I am naturally haſty and active, and at firſt I met with great Difficulties in this Eſtabliſh-

Eaſtbliſhment, but have ſucceeded better ſince I reſtrained the Impetuoſity of my Temper. You have good Senſe; your Intentions are upright; truſt to my Friendſhip and Experience; don't hurry yourſelf; don't hurry others; take Relaxation; amuſe yourſelf; labour with Chearfulneſs; and by Degrees Things will take a good Turn. I am far from being perſuaded that you ought to throw up your Employment. Did you imagine or conſider, that at the Age of eight and twenty you undertook the Government of a Convent in a ruinous Condition, both as to its temporal and ſpiritual Concerns, full of Nuns accuſtomed to act as they pleaſe in every thing? Yet they bear with the Alterations you make, and the Preference you give the ſix young Ladies of *St. Cyr*, whom you put in their Places; they eſteem you, they fear you, and let you act in every thing as you think proper. 'Tis a Happineſs you had no Right to expect. You would have a Houſe, where the ſame Regularity ſhould prevail that does here. But how much Time has it not coſt to regulate *St. Cyr*? We have been here theſe one and twenty Years; nay began two Years before at *Noiſy*; and you would expect to do in two Years what we have done in twenty-three. You waſte yourſelf by this unreaſonable Activity. Do your Duty, and

laugh

laugh at what People ſay. Who is there that is not liable to Calumny? Did you never hear the King blamed, and his Miniſters criticized? And were you to know what People ſay of me! were I to ſhew you the Things againſt me, written even to myſelf!

LETTER CXVIII.

To the ſame.

June 18, 1707.

I WAS very uneaſy about you, my dear Daughter, and I thank God for his having preſerved you. Methinks you are not as yet good enough to die, and that you muſt go through more Trials, and lay up a greater Store of good Works.

Uſe your own Experience, if you will make none of mine. 'Twas your Vivacity brought you to Death's Door; you put your Blood into ſuch a Ferment that it circulated no longer. Monſieur *Fagon*, whom I conſulted in Preſence of the Cardinal *de Noailles*, made me thoroughly acquainted with the Nature of your Diſeaſe. I have told Mademoiſelle *d'Aumale* what Remedies he has preſcribed for you, but he inſiſts above all things, on your making your Mind eaſy. 'Tis abſolutely neceſſary for the Health of both

your

your Soul and your Body. Our Children of *St. Cyr* ought to conſider that they were on the Point of loſing you, and that they muſt be unhappy if they cling too faſt to you. God alone never abandons us. I was greatly moved at their Affliction. I have a very good Opinion of my Siſter *de Champlebon*. I believe ſhe makes a very good Subject. Form her to ſucceed you, and then we will permit you to become a private Nun.

Mademoiſelle *d'Aumale* tells me, your little Favourite hates the Poor, and bluſhes when ſhe hears her Siſter's Name mentioned: God bleſs her! I hope you have no Nun weak enough to think her happy in having the Heart of a Prince. Teach your Children to deſpiſe the World, and all its Vanities, this World for whom J. C. did not pray, 'tis ſo corrupt and hardened, tho' he prayed for his Executioners. Blame Evil, but don't hate thoſe who commit it. How happy you will be, if you reſcue this Child from the Danger ſhe will otherwiſe be expoſed to of loſing herſelf!

Is it neceſſary then, that the Biſhop of *Chalons* ſhould tell you, you are haſty and paſſionate? Don't you perceive it yourſelf better than others. I am greatly edified at the Manner in which you bore that heavy Storm of Hail that did you ſo much Miſchief. All that you have hitherto done,

to

to put your Temporalities upon a good Footing, is inferior in Point of Merit to the Submiſſion with which you received this little Check. Self-love inſinuates itſelf into moſt of our Actions, but ſeldom has any thing to do with our Reſignations.

I am now come to your Letter of the 27th. 'Tis true I am not well. Your Thoughts of giving your Life for mine are out of Seaſon. You are but juſt arrived, and I am going to depart. I have almoſt entirely finiſhed my Career; you but juſt entering upon yours.

I had almoſt forgot your Affair with Monſieur *de Citeaux*. I don't know if my Siſter *de Champlebon*'s Profeſſion is void, but I know you ought not to contradict your Superior. I am for depending on the Biſhops. Convents, in my Opinion, are beſt governed under their Inſpection, and I wiſh, with all my Heart, yours were of that Number: But I don't know if 'tis an eaſy matter to make it ſo, and I am afraid of ſeeing you engaged in a very tedious Law-Suit with Monſieur *de Citeaux*. This would be bringing your Name into Queſtion very early! But I ſubmit to the two great Prelates who protect you.

Were I in your Place, I ſhould receive the hundred Livres from Monſieur *de Citeaux*, in the Spirit of Humility, Poverty, and Obedience.

Chriſtians

Chriſtians ſhould not be proud, much leſs Nuns: The Vows of *St. Cyr* don't concern you. 'Tis an eaſy Matter for the Ladies of *St. Lewis* not to accept of Favours; their magnificent Founder has amply ſupplied all their Wants. There is a great Difference between being founded by a Saint, and being founded by a King.

I have ordered Mademoiſelle *d'Aumale* to ſend you ſome Money, and ſhall on this Occaſion tell you my Mind very freely. Don't imagine, I beſeech you, that what I do to re-eſtabliſh *Gomer-Fontaines* is done out of Friendſhip to you. We ought to act from a more noble Principle. Mine is the Glory of God, whoſe Service I would willingly promote in your Houſe. 'Tis true, you appeared to me as a proper Inſtrument for ſo great a Work.

Adieu. My Secretary is greatly afraid of the Thunder: With all her Merit ſhe has the Timidity of a Hare.

LETTER CXIX.

To the ſame.

October 17, 1707.

I FIND I have at laſt brought you to reaſonable Terms; you conſent that I ſhould dictate my Letters to Mademoiſelle *d'Aumale*, provided

vided you have at leaſt a couple of Lines in my own Hand-writing.

I am very certain, that the Journey to *St. Cyr* muſt have been of Service to you as well as to Madame *Fortuné*; hence that ſpeedy Compliance: But I cannot gueſs at the Meaning of your not ſhutting yourſelf up again in your Convent. I know not if 'tis cuſtomary with you, at leaſt I never heard it was, and I ſhould be apt to conſider it as a great Irregularity, not that I think ill of every thing that is not practiſed at *St. Cyr* *. Every Order enjoys its own Cuſtoms and Maxims. Your Noviciate is your true Reſource. You ought to take the greateſt Care of it, and know the Novices as well as their Miſtreſſes. You cannot too earneſtly exhort them to repoſe an entire Confidence in her, and ſhe ought to aſſure them that ſhe keeps nothing a Secret from you. Would you inſpire your Nuns with Uprightneſs? Let them perceive it in your whole Conduct, and never have Recourſe to thoſe miſerable Shifts, which with ſome Nuns paſs for prudent Meaſures. The Community's Intereſt is no Excuſe for Avarice: Yet ſhould I be ſorry you were not a good Oeconomiſt.

* The Ladies of *St. Lewis* never quit the Convent, even when their Health may ſeem moſt to require ſuch Indulgence.

Nuns

Nuns ſhould have open and generous Hearts in the midſt of that Poverty which they have made a Vow of embracing.

Monſieur *de Lort* is no way obliged to me. I gave him his Petition, and that is all. His Requeſt was granted, becauſe it was reaſonable. People would have it, that every thing is done thro' Favour, and by me; but they are greatly miſtaken.

'Tis not your Intereſt Madame *de Lande* has in View, but that of her Niece, in the Offer ſhe makes you of her. This Woman, on every Occaſion gives Proofs of a very bad Heart.

You often flattered me with the Thoughts of having contributed to all the Good you diſcover at *St. Cyr*. If I really have done any, 'tis owing to my careful Superintendance of their Recreations. I have been aſſiduous at them theſe twenty Years. It is here that a diligent Superior gains the Love and Eſteem of her Nuns, and chears up their Spirits by affording them a little Pleaſure. Edifying Things are then ſaid without being tireſome, becauſe ſeaſoned with Chearfulneſs; and good Maxims may be cloſely thrown out without Affectation. But to ſucceed in all this, my dear Daughter, a Superior ſhould give all her Attention to others, and reckon herſelf as nothing. She muſt ſuffer thoſe to ſpeak whoſe

Discourse is perhaps the most disagreeable; bear being thwarted, and abstain from serious Reproofs. Now, sure I am you have this Talent; and I am equally sure it was not given you for your own private Advantage.

In your Church, and in your Cloisters, in your Gardens, and in your Furniture, every thing must breathe that Poverty you profess. Is God honoured by a little more or a little less gilding? or by the most elegant Ornaments? Nothing more than Neatness is requisite any where; more especially at the Altar. By Simplicity, not by Magnificence, is the Deity honoured. Many Convents have I seen where half the Nuns never bestowed a quarter of an Hour extraordinary in Prayer on the great Holidays. They forget their God to deck his Altar!

LETTER CXX.

To the same.

December 21, 1707.

MOnsieur *Treilh* is charmed with you, and your Community. Had he Wings, you would find him returned there already.

You form wonderful Resolutions, but you must reduce them to Practice. You have every

Talent

Talent requiſite to do great Good, without wanting any thing more than a little Experience; ſupply this Want by taking Advice, which you cannot but find between the Cardinal, Monſieur *Treilh*, and me. I ſhould be glad to include the Abbeſs of *Jouarre*, whom I ſaw at *St. Cyr*. She is ſimple, humble, and full of Zeal. She told me, ſhe was not her own Miſtreſs, and that there was not a Moment of the Day that ſhe was not ready to liſten to any of her Nuns, who deſired to ſpeak to her; that 'twas a great Mortification to her to ſee her Inclination ſo often thwarted, but that ſhe thought it was her Duty to ſubmit to it. She likewiſe told me ſhe had fifty-two Nuns to govern, and that ſhe did not think ſhe harboured the leaſt Diſguſt to any one of them, or that ſhe was not poſſeſſed of all their Hearts. It is preciſely in this Situation, my dear Daughter, that I ſhould be glad to ſee you, and I may have that Comfort, if you but earneſtly wiſh it yourſelf. Monſieur *de Treilh* has informed me of the good Reaſons you have for not repoſing an entire Confidence in your Confeſſor. But then you might repoſe more in him than you do, and give him Leave in the Confeſſional to point out your Failings, and give you ſome good Advice; for Confeſſion muſt be very dry, and afford but little Exerciſe to the Penitent's Humility, when

it conſiſts merely of Acculation and Abſolution.

I ſhall write again to Monſieur *de Lamoignon* in Favour of Mademoiſelle *de St. Pol.* Nothing can be ſo apt to make Time appear heavy, as the having to deal with Girls that think it ſo.

I promiſe you I ſhall always love my Abbeſs. I heard this Morning that you have Monſieur *de Meaux*'s Letters. You cannot read them too often, but they are not to be left in the Hands of your Nuns.

LETTER CXXI.

To the ſame.

January 22, 1708.

YOUR Letter, my dear Daughter, gave me more Pleaſure than I can well expreſs. There appears ſo much good Senſe and Virtue in every thing you ſay, that I can ſcarce refrain congratulating myſelf on the Succeſs of the Plan of Education followed at *St. Cyr.* See and eſtabliſh this good Spirit of yours at *Gomer-Fontaines*, this Spirit of Liberty, this Spirit of the Children of the Houſe, which baniſhes that Servility which makes Servants ever deſirous of hiding their Actions from the Head of the Family. I am greatly pleaſed that, at the ſame time

time you ſee the Failings of the Mother of your Novices, you are not blind to her Virtues. We are all, even the beſt of us, a Compound of Good and Evil.

I thank you for your Prayers for my Relation, who is very happy in thus benefiting by your Friendſhip for me! If mine for you was not as great as it is, your Letter would be ſufficient to increaſe it.

You acted heroically in humbling yourſelf before your Nuns: Nothing can be more proper to draw down great Bleſſings on your Undertakings; but frequently to repeat it, would be to render your Authority contemptible. Theſe Acts of Humility muſt be reſerved for great Occaſions. Smart Rebukes are to be given in private; when you find it requiſite to give them at a full Meeting of your Nuns, prepare the Criminal to receive them. Reprimands are ſufficiently diſagreeable in themſelves, without adding Confuſion to them. Your ſole Aim ſhould be to reform, and no Reformation is to be expected from harſh Methods. I have forwarded your Letter to your Archbiſhop *, who is one of the beſt Men living; but his Merit can be of little

* Monſieur *d'Aubigny*, a Relation of Madame *de Maintenon*, Arch-biſhop of *Rouen*.

Service

Service to you. Adieu, my dear Abbeſs. I may ſafely promiſe that I ſhall ever love you, becauſe I am ſure you will ever render yourſelf worthy of it.

LETTER CXXII.

To the ſame.

February 11, 1708.

CONcerning Madame *de St. Val*'s Affairs, you ſpeak like a mere Nun, that is, like one who knows very little of the World. She ought to be very well ſatisfied with the King's giving her future Spouſe the Command of a Frigate, nor would he have done ſo much for him, but out of ſome Regard to the Services of his Uncle, which, however, he is not to build upon. What is it to the King that this Girl ſhould get a Huſband? If there was but one young Lady of *St. Cyr* to ſettle in the World, what might ſhe not expect? but there are thirty to be provided for every Year! I am ſure, Madame *de St. Pol* will be an Honour to us; tho' it is for her own Sake, and not for ours, I wiſh ſhe may turn out well. You ſay nothing, Madam, of our dear Houſe. I ſhould be glad to know if the Members are obedient, and the Head watchful, for in that Caſe

every

every thing muſt go right. I am very ſorry, my dear Daughter, for the little Aſſiſtance I can give you. Money is ſcarce, and every one feels it. Let us live frugal, and ſuffer with Patience, till the Return of Peace; Yet ſhould I be glad to pay you for your ſilk Gloves.

You have now then ſome of my Hand-writing; much more than deſerves that Fondneſs you expreſs for it. 'Tis but Childiſh in you to judge of my Friendſhip by the Circumſtance of my Writing or Dictating.— I embrace your Community, and remember them all; tho' I mention not Individuals.

LETTER CXXIII.

To the ſame.

May 2, 1708.

I OFTEN complained of your Silence to Mademoiſelle *d'Aumale*, not that I diſapprove your leaving yourſelf quite at Liberty in this Reſpect, and avoiding Affectation in every thing; ſo as to write four Times in one Day, if it appear requiſite; tho' when Occaſion does not require, you ſhould remain ſilent for a Month. You would have it, my dear Daughter, that I never anſwer your Letters but when I want to reprimand; and that I ſay no-

thing when Things go well; and you are indeed partly in the right. Were I to praiſe you as often and as much as you deſerve, I ſhould never have done, and you have too much Virtue and Courage to ſtand in need of ſuch a Support. 'Tis true I ſpoke to the Cardinal of what I thought he ought to recommend to you. I am perſuaded of your Confidence in him, and intend he ſhould make of you a Model for other Abbeſſes. You have done great Matters, if you have prevailed upon him never to rebuke you in publick, but then conſult ſeriouſly with yourſelf, if you ſhould diſlike a little private Admonition. Publick Rebukes are more diſagreeable than the moſt abuſive Language in private. You are improved in this Reſpect, and I can't wiſh you too much Joy of it. I do not conceive the Meaning of your Nuns not having a Taſte for Recreation, if you endeavour to make it agreeable, and employ for that Purpoſe all the amiable Qualities you poſſeſs. The ſillieſt among them are thoſe who affect to be witty, yet muſt you not thwart them too much. No Reſtraint is of equal Force with the Paſſions. You muſt therefore indulge them in whatever may make the publick Recreations agreeable; they promote a general Harmony; deſtroy particular Connections, and private

private Cabals, which are the Sources of great Diſorders in religious Houſes.

Comfort your Nuns in their Troubles, and even give a little into their Whims. Take good Care of your temporal Concerns, and better ſtill of your ſpiritual ones. The Deſtruction of ſo many religious Houſes is a juſt Judgment of God for their unwarrantable Deſires of aggrandizing themſelves.

Admit no Preacher to your Pulpit, whoſe Life and Doctrine you are not well acquainted with. What better Meaſures can you think of, than thoſe you have already agreed upon with the Cardinal? Deſpiſe the Murmurs of Envy and Prejudice. Was ever any Government attended with univerſal Applauſe? To be angry with Slingers *, is the ſureſt Way of increaſing their Numbers. The Cardinal will not yield. He is eaſy in his Behaviour, but firm in his Reſolutions. You are too young to be ſuſpicious, but Experience will teach you, that too many Precautions cannot be uſed in the Choice of Prieſts, and the Government of Nuns.

You may make uſe of my Name for your own private Advantage, but not to engage me

* A Term in *France*, firſt given to thoſe who ſpoke or wrote againſt the Adminiſtration of one of their Miniſters, but now more univerſally applied.

in the Affairs of *St. Bernard*'s Order. I don't know if this Reform is ſo deſirable an Event; or if the Religious themſelves deſire it. I am a Stranger to their Sentiments on the Occaſion; but I ſet more value upon the Religious of a mitigated Order, who comply with their Obligations, than on thoſe of an Order exteriorly reformed, who ſhould allow themſelves (as many do) any unwarrantable Indulgence. But, after all, my dear Daughter, were this really a good Work, it would notwithſtanding be quite foreign to us. We can only take Part in it by our Wiſhes. Let every one attend to their own Buſineſs.

Adieu. You ſhall have no Reaſon to complain of my Silence, if my Letters can be of any Service to you. Do your Duty. Your pious Endeavours may not immediately ſucceed, but 'tis impoſſible they ſhould not be attended ſome time or another with happy Conſequences; and tho' they ſhould not, Virtue methinks is, in itſelf, too amiable to be neglected.

LETTER

LETTER CXXIV.

To the ſame.

June 20, 1708.

I HAVE juſt wrote to Monſieur *de Citeaux*, and ſent him your Letter. No Doubt 'tis very wrong to charge you with what paſſes in Regard to your *Bernardin* Friar, who far from putting *Paris* in a Ferment by his Sollicitations, ſhould have renounced all his Claims, when he ſaw the King heſitate about them. You are as yet unacquainted with the Art of Suffering; I muſt allow that you confine yourſelf pretty well to your Duties, as an Abbeſs, and indeed 'tis there your Strength lies. I was once told that our Troubles proceed from the Intrigues in which we engage, a great deal more than from the Faults we commit; and I have a thouſand Times ſince experienced the Truth of that Maxim. Be patient and vigilant; I formerly ordered theſe Words to be fixed over all the Doors of *St. Cyr*, and nothing can be more neceſſary than theſe two Virtues, to thoſe who govern, or thoſe who obey.

What do you mean, my dear Daughter, by complaining of the Ingratitude of your Nuns? In labouring for them, do you labour from a

Motive of Love to them? You will never be ſatisfied, if you don't act on ſome nobler Principle, ſuch as the Ladies of *St. Cyr*, whom you ſo much admire, are governed by. Our Superior never reckoned upon the Gratitude of her Community. The Mother of our Novices has no Thoughts of making Friends or Enemies of any of her Children. The Miſtreſſes of the Claſſes will never complain that the young Ladies are inſenſible of their Obligations to thoſe who inſtruct them. Our Siſters of the Infirmary don't take it amiſs that the ſick ſhould forget their Services. Every Lady here acts merely from a Principle of Duty. You will never be either holy or happy, while you reckon upon Mankind. Have you a Mind to be in perpetual Trouble? Expect ſomething from them, for they will be ſure to fail you; and if they ſhould not, you will have received your Reward. I have more than once remarked in your Letters, where you had Occaſion to ſpeak of your Nuns, the Expreſſion, *She is not of my Party.* A Superior have a Party! they ſhould all be equally dear to you. Are you not the Mother of them all? And ſhould you give any Reaſon to ſuſpect you do not love them all alike. At this rate, neither your Virtue nor your good Senſe, nor the Education you received at *St. Cyr*, nor the Cardinal's Inſtructions,

ſtructions, nor all we have recommended to you by Word of Mouth, and by Writing, have been able to cure you of this Weakneſs, ſo contrary to your Duty. 'Tis a great Pity I have not Time to examine myſelf thoroughly! I ſhould find much greater Failings than thoſe I reproach you with! You have now had my Anſwer to the firſt Article of your Letter. My Zeal has led me a great way. As to your Temporalities, I am very far from thinking you ſhould neglect them; for 'tis one of your Duties to ſuperintend them, but I would have them give way to your ſpiritual Concerns. I would have you to be more afflicted at an Irregularity than at an unneceſſary Expence; I would have you employ your beſt Nuns in forming good Nuns, and leave your Temporalities to the Care of thoſe of a middling Capacity. I would have your bear the Childiſh Airs of your Novices, who laugh or cry without Cauſe, and permit them to be chearful, for the chearfulleſt will ever turn out beſt, but then ſuffer no Fondneſs or Familiarity between them. I would have you behave with Mildneſs and Steddineſs to that untractable Nun, and ſeldom inſiſt on her doing thoſe Things to which ſhe has ſo great an Averſion, yet now-and-then condemn her to them, in order to break her by Degrees to a Habit of ready Submiſſion and Obedience:

I would have you to know that the Poſt of Miſtreſs of the Novices is the moſt important Employment of your Houſe, even more important than that of the Abbeſs, who has nothing to do but to govern; whereas the Miſtreſs of the Novices is not only to chuſe proper Subjects, but likewiſe to form them. I am ſhocked at what you write me of yours; I ſhall ſpeak no more of her as it would be ſpeaking to no Purpoſe.

Do not deſire to know my Reaſons for ſpeaking to you in this manner. I have not heard any thing that is new, but I love you. There are in you Ingredients to form an excellent Abbeſs. You may expect every thing from true, ſolid, upright Piety. 'Tis Piety alone that can enable you to fulfil your Duty; without it all your Talents would be uſeleſs, and with it they will produce an hundred Fold.

You are not often to expect ſuch long Letters from me, in my own Hand-writing; I am grown very weak, and every thing fatigues me: Conſider this as my Will, and a Proof of my ſincere Regard for you.

LETTER CXXV.

To the same.

'TIS easy to give Advice, but Advice given at a Distance is always vague and liable to be misunderstood; the Application of it is every thing. I should therefore be glad you could make a Director of your Confessor, as he knows you, and could follow you Step by Step. Yet I approve your Reasons, for they are very good ones; I have lived too long to be ignorant of the Abuses committed in the Direction of Consciences. There are very few Directors pure, disinterested, and upright; but that is no Reason why we should abandon ourselves to our own Direction. Self-love deceives us in the Opinion we form of ourselves; our Levity is apt to destroy that Steadiness of Conduct so essential to a pious Life; our natural Inclinations hurry us out of the right Road, if a wise Director does not restrain them. Obedience gives a great Value to our most inconsiderable Actions; and 'tis only by suffering ourselves to be conducted, we can hope to attain a sure Settlement, and by making ourselves little that we can pretend to become great; we must therefore have guides, but we can't be too careful in chusing them; and you

ſhall have one as ſoon as you are truly diſpoſed to put an entire Confidence in him. Monſieur *Treilh* would be very fit for this Purpoſe, and I know the Arch-biſhop of *Rouen* will not refuſe him Leave to hear Confeſſions. He is a very ſenſible Man, very upright, and well acquainted with the Nature of a religious Spirit. You might make a general Confeſſion to him, after which every thing could be done by Letters. He would viſit you twice a Year, which is as often as you would want to ſee him. You may have a Director at *Paris* whenever you pleaſe, on theſe Conditions. Two or three Journeys a Year to *Gomer-Fontaines* cannot bear hard upon any one. Look out then for the Director, aſk him of God, and you will find him; but don't take any, if you are not willing to be conducted by him.

Mademoiſelle *d'O* . . . . ought never to forget the Education ſhe received at *St. Cyr*. Let her conſider what ſhe has to do; let her act in a manner different from her Mother, but without departing from the Reſpect ſhe owes her. Adviſe with her about her Siſter. I ſhould be glad to take her from her Mother, whoſe Example I am afraid ſhe may follow, but I don't know where to put her. I could get Lettres de Cachet for both one and the other, but they would indeed be *Lettres de Cachet*.

LETTER CXXVI.

To Madame du Peron.

THO' People may look upon what happened at your Houſe on Occaſion of the Biſhop of *Blois*' Conſecration *, as a Thing not worth Notice, I thought it of ſo much Importance, that I acquainted the King with it. Has he not forbid you to accept any thing, to purchaſe any thing? Not only he enjoined it to you in your Rules, but made it one of the Conditions of your Charter. I want Words to tell you how much your Behaviour has ſcandalized him. He immediately expreſſed a Deſire of going to *St. Cyr* in Perſon, to acquaint you again with his Intentions on this Head, and I make no Doubt but he will pay you a Viſit for that Purpoſe on his Return to *Verſailles*. He was greatly diſpleaſed at my not having immediately ſent away every thing you permitted to come into your Houſe contrary to his Orders. He aſked me, what could be expected from you after his Death, ſince at leſs than a Mile's Diſtance from him,

* In regard to ſome Planks, made uſe of at this Ceremony, which remained in the Church, and the Superior cauſed to be put by in the Store-houſe of the Abbey, as no one could tell who they belonged to.

under

under his Eyes, and under mine, you presumed to trespass against the Institutes of your House, and the Founder of it? You can't study your Obligations too much. Bad Examples will never justify you. Your Disinterestedness should be perfect, for 'tis impossible your House should want for any thing, as long as there is a King in *France*. Enquire therefore very carefully, if this Timber has been given, or not, to *la Ferté*, and let me have a precise Answer. I wish either that you may be innocent, or humble enough to own yourself guilty.

LETTER CXXVII.

To the same.

IF we neglect to instruct our Nuns, as soon as I am dead there will be Guardians appointed to take Care of them; they will get, as superintendant of their Temporalities, some one who will give them perpetual Trouble, or ruin them by his Impositions, or his Mismanagement. I know we must have Patience with them; we can't expect they should be very expert this long time to come; and this is the Reason of my being in such Haste to form them. I offer myself, and all my Family to serve them, and I shall think nothing of becoming myself their Steward,

Steward, their House-keeper, their Servant, if doing so I can but teach them to act for themselves in these Capacities. This is my Aim, these are the Sentiments of my Heart; 'tis from this all my Impatience and Earnestness proceeds; and I leave you to judge, if I am mistaken.

No indiscreet Oeconomy! if any Retrenchment is requisite, let it be from you who are Nuns, and not from the young Ladies. 'Tis you that have made Vows of Poverty. In Times of Distress let not the young Ladies eat brown Bread, till you are yourselves reduced to black: And perpetuate in your House the good Spirit of considering them in every Thing as the primary Object of your Institution.

From the same Principle be always ready to sacrifice your temporal to your spiritual Concerns. Be more attentive to maintain Regularity, than to make the most of your Revenues. The Ruin of religious Houses never proceeds from Disinterestedness. Don't employ your best Nuns in keeping your Accounts, but in forming the Novices, and in instructing the Children. Never forget that it was not for you *St. Cyr* was built, and that it was for them you took the Veil. What would be Acts of Supererogation in others, in you are Duties not to be omitted.

LETTER

LETTER CXXVIII.

To Madame de Roquemont.

YES, my dear Daughter, I am the Protectreſs of Recreation, and I ſhall never ceaſe recommending that and good Diſcipline. In my Opinion one contributes to the other, and Nuns who obſerve the Silence enjoined by their Rules, and apply themſelves diligently to the Government of the Claſſes, and to diſcharge the other Duties of the Houſe, require ſome Opportunity of unbending their Minds. I can't imagine that any Recreations, regulated by the Superior, can be productive of Miſchief, and am inclined to think that thoſe who oppoſe them, have leſs Humility and Simplicity than thoſe who imagine they ſtand in Need of ſome Relaxation; and that the Auſterity of the former proceeds from Self-love. I believe that thoſe who are really moſt fervent and mortified, will render themſelves more agreeable to God, by conforming to the reſt, than by endeavouring to diſtinguiſh themſelves; and that Charity and Condeſcention are of greater Value than any voluntary Auſterities whatſoever. In fine, my dear Daughter, I think your Superiors ſhould be very attentive to amuſe you, as long as you don't endea-

vour

vour to procure yourſelves any Pleaſure from without Doors; and within abſtain from all Irregularities. I am the bolder to ſpeak my Mind freely, as your holy Biſhop, whom I have often conſulted on the Occaſion, and who certainly is not ſuſpected of Relaxation, has often anſwered me, that you were allowed too little Time for your Recreations. Continue therefore to ſollicit boldly for them. I wiſh your Health would permit you to have a Share in them, as I moſt tenderly love you. But why ſhould thoſe who have compoſed the Rules, think them ſo ſtrict and exact? Would it not be better to mitigate them, than to grant Recreations ſo often? No; it is abſolutely neceſſary the Ladies of *St. Lewis* ſhould be exact; and any Alteration in the Rules would be detrimental to the End for which the Rules were formed. We muſt moderate our Labour, but not deſert it.

Little *de Villefort* is drowned in Sorrow, but on my giving her a Piſtole, her Countenance cleared up, which proves that we bring with us into the World every inordinate Deſire. Your Servants are in the Vapours, perhaps a Preſent would cure them; give them therefore, from me, ten Piſtoles. Our Maſters * find the Time here very heavy, and yet pretend that it paſſes very agree-

* The Royal Family.

ably.

ably. Commend me to *St. Cyr!* in Spite of all its Faults, I had rather live there than in any other Place on the Face of the Earth. I dare not ſpeak to Siſter *de Glapion*, on Account of her too great Senſibility and my own. What a Happineſs 'tis, my dear Daughter, to be able to find God in all Places! for what Creature ever ſufficed itſelf!

LETTER CXXIX.

To Madame de Champigny.

I Never ſaw any thing ſo pretty, ſo genteel, ſo engaging, ſo clear, ſo well planned, ſo eloquent, ſo regular, in a Word, never any thing ſo wonderful as your Letter. If your Conſcience is in as good Order, Monſieur *Treilh* * has a very eaſy Taſk. 'Tis true, my dear Daughter, that mine is at Peace, but you would be very uneaſy, were you to ſee the Sallies of Impatience and Indignation, the Fits of Grief, and ſometimes even of Deſpair, of my poor Spirit, in the midſt of the Importunities you mention, which are encreaſed beyond Meaſure ſince the Court of *England* and ours have lived together. I believe you have too much good Senſe to grieve at my

* Madame *de Champigny*'s Confeſſor.

Abſence;

Abſence; I ſhall be back, pleaſe God, by the 27th of this Month. Your Panegyrick on Siſter *Vandam* is a Maſter-piece. You know, my dear Daughter, how much I love you; my Love is ſo ſincere you cannot but perceive it.

LETTER CXXX.

To Madame de Fontaines.

I Have no News to tell you ſince Yeſterday, except that we are ſpattered from Head to Foot, almoſt drowned, and worried to death. As for myſelf in particular, I am over-whelmed with Grief at ſeeing myſelf ſo long ſeparated from my dear Children, in whom all my Wiſhes centered. I muſt aſk Siſter *de Radonay*'s Pardon for this Phraſe, which after all is too weak to expreſs the Greatneſs of my Diſtreſs in the midſt of Company, Careſſes, Pleaſures, Honours, and Riches. Let us ſay no more of it, for ſhe would never pardon me. Theſe Circumſtances added to the Badneſs of the Weather, hinder me from taking ſeveral little charitable Journies, which would be an Amuſement to myſelf, and of Service to others. Tell that ſullen Woman (*Madame de Jas*) that the Subject of her Letter is ſo important, that I ſhould not fail to anſwer it,

it, if I was not ſure you can ſay to her as much on the Occaſion, as I could ſay myſelf. The Haſtineſs of my Temper contributes as much to render me uſeleſs, as a Want of Capacity.

LETTER CXXXI.

To Madame du Peron.

July 28, 1708.

I NO longer take any Delight in writing to you, my dear Daughter, becauſe I ſhould be glad to give you Pleaſure, and I can only make you uneaſy. After all, Affairs in *Flanders* don't go ill. The greateſt Part of the Troops that were diſperſed, are come back to their Colours. The Number of the killed is but ſmall, and that of the Priſoners leſs than was reported, ſo that we have ſtill a numerous Army, and in good Spirits, but I am afraid of the Duke of *Vendome*'s Preſumption bringing us into ſome new Scrape, in caſe we riſked another Battle. The Duke of *Burgundy* was conſtantly of the Number of thoſe who gave the beſt Advice, but his Want of Experience prevents an entire Confidence in his Judgment. It would be a great Happineſs to you to ſee his Letters, they are ſo full of Courage, Piety, and good Senſe! I earneſtly

neſtly recommend him to all your Prayers, and you muſt pray for him with uncommon Fervour and Devotion. Our Princes have been expoſed to a Danger to which even Death would have been preferable. My greateſt Alarms at preſent are for *Dauphiné*, where 'tis impoſſible the Duke of *Savoy* ſhould not do a great deal of Miſchief, tho' moſt People imagine that, in Caſe he made an Irruption into that Province, he would not be long able to maintain his Footing. I never ſtood ſo much in Need of *St. Cyr* both to hide me, and to comfort me. God knows where our greateſt Senſibility lies, and how to ſtrike us there. I experience it by a long Abſence from you. Be chearful however, my dear Children, your Grief would only ſerve to encreaſe mine. Form Saints that may obtain a Peace for us. I find Matter of Affliction in every thing I ſee, and in every thing I hear, but we have a powerful Comforter.

LETTER

LETTER CXXXII.

To the ſame.

Auguſt 4, 1708.

I Often want Time to write to you, but oftener Courage. I am under perpetual Alarms about the Succeſs of the Campaign. The Duke of *Burgundy* is at the Head of a powerful Army, advantageouſly poſted, well ſupplied with every thing, and in high Spirits, but 'tis ſaid he can't bring it Home without a Battle, and my Heart is ready to burſt at the Thoughts of one. I deſire therefore, my dear Daughter, you will on this Occaſion do every thing that you may think propereſt to draw down the Bleſſing of God upon our Arms, and ſet on foot *Novena's* * of Prayers and Maſſes. I can't diſſemble with you, my dear Daughter, ſo that my Letters can only afflict you. Don't acquaint Madame *de Glapion* with every thing I tell you; you muſt ſpare her Senſibility. Not only yourſelf muſt take Courage, you muſt inſpire the reſt of your Houſe with it.

* Devotions of any kind, that laſt for nine Days together.

LETTER

LETTER CXXXIII.

To the ſame.

I Have been under terrible Apprehenſions for the Province of *Dauphiné*, and in a downright Fever for four and twenty Hours; but Yeſterday we learned that the Duke of *Savoy* had ſtopt ſhort, that the Duke of *Berwick* was under no great Apprehenſions, and that the Inhabitants of *Lyons* had on this Occaſion given ſignal Proofs of their Courage, Affection, and Loyalty. They did every thing that was proper to be done in ſuch a Conjuncture, covered their Suburbs with Intrenchments, and provided for a vigorous Defence. Siſter *de Vertrieux* * muſt write to *Lyons* to let them know how much we are delighted with their Behaviour. They deſerve to have the Pleaſure of hearing of the King's Approbabation from every Quarter. 'Tis happy for her ſhe knew nothing of the Conſternation I was in for that Country. Yes, certainly, I conſider Madame *de Neuville* as one of my Daughters, and in ſome meaſure too, as a Grand-daughter of *St. Francis de Sales*, with whom, methinks, ſhe was upon very good Terms. I ever had for

* Madame *de Vertrieux* was a Native of *Lyons*.

the

the Ladies of *St. Lewis* the Sentiments of a Mother, ſtill loving them more or leſs as they deſerved. I beg you may tell Siſter *de St. Pars*, that I love her as much when employed in mending your Straw Beds as when employed in making a Niche for the Reception of the bleſſed Sacrament, but I am ſorry ſhe ſhould make any Apology for not writing to me. Were I not ſo much taken up, I would be beforehand with her. Adieu, my dear Daughter.

LETTER CXXXIV.

To Madame de Vieſville.

February 23, 1709.

I Spoke to the King of the *Bermont* Affair, the very Day I received your Letter, and he aſſured me he would not alter his Deciſion. If he has forgot to name a Superior for that Abbey, 'tis becauſe there is no Occaſion for being in any Hurry about it. Monſieur *de Citeaux* deſired I might recommend him ſome good Nun for that Purpoſe, but the beſt are almoſt always leaſt known. I charged Mademoiſelle *d'Aumale* to ſpeak to Monſieur *de Ventadour* for your little Favourite. Drop, I beſeech you, that Title, if you have a Mind to make a good *Bernardin* Nun of her, and

endeavour

endeavour to be one yourself. I heard a Cardinal say, that he valued himself more upon being a Bishop than upon being a Cardinal. You should be of the same Way of thinking, and value yourself more as a Nun than as an Abbess.

You will be very angry at my not sending you Mademoiselle *d'Aumale*, but we are both of us very much afraid that some Accident might happen on the Road. The Famine has caused such a Ferment among the People, that it is not prudent to come in their Way. The Evil is too great to last long, and I hope the Pains taken by the King to procure Corn, will put an End to these Commotions. I am very sensible of your Distress, but waited to see the Cardinal, who told me, that *Abbé Vasse* had received for you some Money due from the *Carmelite* Nuns of *Pontoise*, and I have added 250 Livres to it. 'Tis a Trifle, but if you knew with how many Objects I am surrounded !— 'Tis true that the King has given Orders for the Importation of Corn from abroad, but it will not be at my Disposal, and you must expect no other Benefit from it, than that of seeing the Markets lower. Maréchal *de Noailles*'s funeral Oration is a very good Piece, and has even appeared so to those who intended to ridicule it.

Your

Your Happineſs will ever be proportioned to your Piety, which ought to be ſolid and upright, and 'tis Submiſſion alone can make it ſo. You muſt not expect to be obeyed by others, unleſs you know how to obey yourſelf. I am charmed with the Account Monſieur *Treilh* gives of you. I was ſurprized to hear him ſpeak of the Exceſs of your Piety, becauſe I know he requires a great deal. Hence I conclude you are a Saint, or at leaſt in a fair way of becoming one. Obey this good Man. Thoſe who command always, and never obey, find it a very difficult matter to conquer Pride. My Tenderneſs for you is as lively as ever, and you may expect to be well tormented. People ſpeak of nothing here but *Gomer-Fontaines*, which we repreſent to ourſelves as another *St. Cyr*, and perhaps ſomething better. Let your old Nuns know how tranſported I am at their Greedineſs of the Word of God. I conſider them as my Children, and think myſelf highly honoured in being their Mother. I ſhall always Intereſt myſelf earneſtly for every Houſe, where God is well ſerved. You have Reaſon, Madam, to complain of the little Aſſiſtance to be expected from the greateſt Number; they are not inſtructed in their Duties; the Sermons they hear are very long, very vague, and very uſeleſs; their Preachers ſhould be more

particular.

particular. You may well imagine we did not forget to ſpeak of your Novices. He deſcribed *la Vieſville* as fair and ruddy, *Blezel* with a very broad Face, *Champlebon* ſomewhat pale, but all of them very fervent. Love them, I beſeech you, Madam. I wrote to your Favourite, when I thought I could ſerve her. I have too ſmall a Time to live, to throw any Part away, conſidering eſpecially how much of it my Condition already makes me loſe. 'Tis true indeed, that Time ſpent in ſuffering is not loſt.

You do very well in endeavouring to ſnatch Mademoiſelle *de Sermoiſe* from the World, in which ſhe would be more expoſed to Danger than another; but pay ſome Regard to her Age and Conſtitution, which are incapable of great Auſterities. 'Tis ſilly to imagine that young People muſt be early inured to them. They muſt have firſt attained a proper Age, and acquired a ſufficient Stock of Health and Strength; and then indeed they may follow their Rules. Mademoiſelle *de Bailly* muſt accuſtom herſelf to do without my Writing; ſhe may ſee I ſcarcely give even yourſelf any of it. I wrote indeed to Mademoiſelle *de Sermoiſe*, becauſe I imagined the Appearance of my Hand might make the Contents of that Letter ſink deeper into her Heart.

If what Nuns call a Sacrifice, was really ſo, your Relations would no longer make any Claim upon you, nor you upon them. You ſhould have no Intereſt but in your Community. I have ſtill Memory enough to recollect that your Confidence in your Siſter created ſome Jealouſy. If you don't love her, you can be no great Comfort to her; and if you do, the reſt of the Houſe will be jealous at it. Receive her however, my dear Daughter, for weak as your Reaſons are, I muſt, through Compaſſion, yield to them, and to thoſe Complaints made by Relations, who know nothing of the Duties of Perſons dead to the World. You may depend on my not reſenting your Siſter's Admiſſion, I only wiſh that you may not ſoon have Reaſon to repent it. You will ſuffer a great deal before you will be able to prevail on yourſelf to let me know it, and at laſt you will part with her. But your Seperation will be attended with one Advantage, that of her never thinking again to return; and the Reproaches ſhe may afterwards make, will be far leſs grievous than if ſhe were on the Spot.

Cannot you ſend away ſome of the Girls I pay for. Alas! we muſt think of ſparing even Bread; and I have the Mortification of being obliged to leſſen the Number of my Penſioners, at a Time I ſhould

I ſhould be glad to increaſe it. I give Mademoiſelle *d'Aumale* 200 Livres to ſend you. You may judge by the Smallneſs of this Sum how low it's with me. It is not true that a Peace has been concluded. We ſhall not have one without your knowing it. But don't contradict the Report, for 'tis not amiſs People ſhould believe it.

Do not imagine I ſerved you, when it was in my Power, with a View of tyranizing over you, or of making myſelf Miſtreſs of your Houſe. My Advice to you ſhall ever be ſincere. Your Siſter and you will do Wonders in the Beginning, but ſome Relaxation will ſoon happen, and you will beſides find it a difficult Taſk to cure the Jealouſy of your Nuns.

I am very ſorry a Nun educated at *St. Cyr*, ſhould not know that ſhe prays to God when ſhe ſerves him; and that ſhe ſerves him, when ſhe ſerves the Houſe to which ſhe has conſecrated herſelf for his Sake. This is a Fervor of Novices, but a very pardonable one, ſince it proceeds from an excellent Principle. Our Siſter, when a little more advanced, will know how to pray by keeping herſelf conſtantly in God's Preſence. We often deceive ourſelves, and look for nothing in Prayer but a little Relaxation from Buſineſs.

'Tis now that Nuns muſt be poor in good earneſt. They made Poverty conſiſt in poſſeſſing nothing, as their own in particular, while at the ſame time they wanted for nothing. This Kind of Poverty was very ſupportable, and I doubt if it really deſerved the Name. To be really poor, one muſt ſuffer ſomething, and this is now the Caſe with every one of you. God grant you may all receive this Viſitation with a Reſignation and Patience that may make Saints of you! But I am of Opinion you ought to neglect nothing to mitigate the other Auſterities of your Rule, as much as your Superiors may think proper to allow it.

LETTER CXXXV.

To the ſame.

December 14, 1709.

IT is not in your Power, Madam, to tire me; your Letters ever give me Pleaſure, but you muſt accuſtom yourſelf to do without me. My Health is gone, I have little Strength and leſs Leiſure. Monſieur *Treilh* is a good Director, and one of the beſt Things I ever did, was to commit your Soul to his Care. It is high Time I ſhould make my Will. What Anſwer would you give, my dear Daughter, to one of

your

your Nuns that ſhould tell you, ſhe was uneaſy at being ſometimes abſent from the Offices of the Church? You would tell her that her Uneaſineſs was very commendable, but that ſhe ought not to carry this Scruple too far, and that God is not ignorant whether ſhe ſought for Pretexts to be abſent, or had good Reaſons for being ſo. We have to deal with a Maſter who is not to be deceived.

It was ſaid, that Mademoiſelle *de Seri* * had ſpent three Weeks with you; but I find it was a falſe Report. This poor Girl is greatly hardened, and will ſooner or later pay dear for her Folly. I often ſpeak to the Dutcheſs of *Ventadour*; neither of us have any great Credit. I am under much Apprehenſion for Mademoiſelle *de Sermoiſe*.

I am apt to think you don't well know how to make your Barley-bread. No one likes it in Soup. I ate of it mixed with Wheat, and it was very good. Monſieur *Fagon* maintains, that it is not unwholeſome. I ſhed Tears on reading the Reception Madame *le Comte*'s Bread met with. It is impoſſible to be unacquainted with Miſery, when I ſee my Children in ſuch Diſtreſs.

* The Duke of *Orleans* Miſtreſs.

LETTER CXXXVI.

To the ſame.

January 16, 1710.

THO' 'tis my Intention to criticiſe every Line of your Letter, I muſt ſet out by telling you, that I am charmed with the Candour with which you ſo much abound.

I did not in the leaſt doubt but that you would be greatly diſpleaſed at my taking Mademoiſelle *de Seri* from you. Some little Zeal for her Converſion, and the Expectation of great Favours, at a Time of great Diſtreſs, ſupply you with many Excuſes before God; but you reaſon upon a falſe Principle, when you ſay ſhe broke off of her own accord. It was the Duke of *Orleans* who turned her away, and the poor Girl did not leave him for once bidding. She muſt therefore have arrived at your Abbey in a Fit of Paſſion and Deſpair; covered with Paint; richly dreſſed; in a Word, a complete Worldling, and a complete Sinner.

I muſt own I thought ſuch a Woman a dangerous Spectacle for an Abbeſs of thirty, and nine young Ladies brought up at *St. Cyr*. Neither did I imagine it was proper to have Mademoiſelle *d'Argenton* in a Houſe with which I maintain

maintain ſo conſtant a Correſpondence, or that it was my Buſineſs to attend to her Hiſtory, and acquaint the Court with every thing ſhe did. 'Tis ſaid ſhe will retire to a Convent at *Compiegne*, where ſhe lived when a Child. I ſhould make no Obſtacle, Madam, to your receiving her, if once ſhe was thoroughly converted. But I ſhould require more years to be ſatisfied of her Converſion, than you would Days to think of admitting her.

You are a ſtrange Woman to ſay that this Girl has a Regard for you. This is that fooliſh Credulity which the World laughs at in Nuns, who believe every thing they hear. But, alas! People are every Day deceived in Friendſhips even of twenty Years ſtanding.

You ſay you are convinced of her Sincerity, and all this on Account of ſome Connections with her Family, without having ever ſeen her. But you ſhould wait to ſee what Turn ſhe will now take, and what will become of her. A great many People think her Converſion ſuperficial She is over Head and Ears in Debt. I ſhould be very ſorry ſhe took her Siſter from your Houſe. I will do all I can, thro' Madame *de Ventadour*, to prevent it.

LETTER CXXXVII.

To Cardinal de Noailles.

St. Cyr, February 13, 1710.

A Young Lady belonging to *St. Cyr* is juſt returned from *Gomer-Fontaines*, and the News ſhe brings from thence ſhock me much. Our Abbeſs ſuffers greatly; they are reduced ſo low as to be obliged to make Uſe of Bread made of Barley, both hard and very black: The Parents are daily withdrawing their Children. One of my Family is going to take Home a Daughter of his, that I had ſent there. The Girl is reduced to meer Skin and Bones; her Appearance ſufficiently demonſtrates the Famine that prevails there. I beg, my Lord, you may make a little Collection in your Houſe, for a Girl of Birth and Merit, and withal your Relation, who is almoſt ſtarved to Death. I can reckon up twenty *Louis d'ors* in your Family, would but the principal ones of thoſe who compoſe it, give each a ſingle one. One of your Ladies of Honour might, for the Trouble of aſking, obtain a Collection from the Dutcheſs of *Burgundy*. You'll tell me, my Lord, that I might provide for her myſelf; but certainly 'tis not equitable that I alone

alone ſhould be obliged to do every thing. A little Aſſiſtance of this Kind would procure them Wheat to mix with their Barley till next Harveſt.

I ſend you the hundred Crowns you make me give your *Dutch* Lady. I have no Doubt at all of her being in great Diſtreſs, but yet I have no Reaſon to prefer her to ſo many Objects with which we are ſurrounded; and I muſt own, had I conſulted nothing but my Inclination, I ſhould have given this Trifle to Madame *de Gomer-Fontaines*, whom I love, rather than to a Stranger I know nothing of. But every thing recommended by you, my Lord, muſt be well. What a ſad Caſe it is to be obliged to leſſen one's Alms, at a Time that they are moſt wanting! God intends we ſhould experience what Miſery is, by depriving us of the Means of relieving it in others.

LETTER CXXXVIII.

To Madame de Glapion.

June 8, 1710.

I Know what has happened, my dear Daughter; and you ought to rejoice at it, at leaſt in the *Superior Region*. You were greatly to blame in doubting of Madame *de* . . . . 's Friendſhip. If ſhe is prejudiced at all, 'tis certainly in your Favour; but let People love and eſteem you ever ſo much, they muſt obſerve Failings in you. I perfectly know what they are, and I know it, becauſe I have them all myſelf, and many more that you are exempt from. Shall we examine our Conſciences together?

We are not humble, but *you* have great Reſources, whereas in *me* every thing contributes to nouriſh Pride. You love, you know, the Practices of your Inſtitute; you will at leaſt get the better of that Senſibility and Diſguſt, that natural Delicacy, which the Affliction, inſeperable from a bad State of Health, contributes to encreaſe. Courage, my dear Daughter! let us pray for Strength to bear with ourſelves, and to bear with others. Let us endeavour to be Saints, for the Sake of this Life as well as the next.

We are apt to be too much ſhocked at the Want of Reaſon in thoſe that are like us, but 'tis no great Proof of our own, for if it was not blind, it would certainly render us more patient.

We are likewiſe apt to have too great a Dependance on our own Practices. In me 'tis Zeal, in you 'tis Probity; and in both a kind of Diffidence in the Providence of God; who employs different Means to compaſs his Ends.

We love to know our Failings without ſuffering others to acquaint us with them.

We are too ſenſible of our own Sufferings, and make ourſelves too uneaſy about thoſe of our Friends. We abandon ourſelves to exceſſive Sadneſs. A Saint once wrote to me, *In your Affliction, and in your Piety, be a Man.* A little Unpoliteneſs would be of great Service to you; nor could even ſome Roughneſs do your any Harm. The Clock calls me, and 'tis a Pity, for I am highly delighted in converſing with you. Whatever Subject we fall upon, the Diſcourſe always pleaſes me. But after all we write too much, and 'tis one of our Failings. We love to ſpeak of ourſelves, tho' to our own Prejudice, and this is one of the Imperfections hardeſt in World to be conquered.

LETTER

LETTER CXXXIX.

To the Cardinal de Noailles.

St. Cyr, June 9, 1710.

THE King, my Lord, has read your Paſtoral Letter, and has marked with the Pen two Paſſages, concerning which he deſires I may explain his Sentiments to you. The firſt relates to the Expreſſion, *Sue for a Peace*, which he thinks inconſiſtent with his Dignity. The ſecond is in Regard to the Uſury. He imagines you would do well to inſiſt a little more upon that Article, as far as it concerns Money, but a great deal more as far as it concerns corn; ſuch Practices being contrary to Nature, and abominable even among Pagans.

The King has been informed, that his Subjects are not ſufficiently inſtructed with Regard to what they owe him. 'Tis his Duty to preſerve and defend them; but then he cannot do it without their own Aſſiſtance. Improve this Hint, and it will be looked upon as a Favour. Theſe Inſtructions are more wanted in *Paris*, where all the Money lies hid, than in the Provinces which have been already exhauſted by their Contributions for his Majeſty's Service.

I gave

I gave the King a full Account of the Contents of your Letter, and he has liſtened to them with the Submiſſion he owes his Archbiſhop. He has retrenched his Table at *Marli*; ſent his Gold Plate to the Mint; given Monſieur *Deſmarets* his Jewels to raiſe Money upon. He will be ever ready, he ſays, to ſtrip himſelf for Subjects who have done ſo much for him.

Yeſterday I received a large Packet from the Duke *de Noailles*, who looks upon a Peace to be as good as concluded, and argues upon that Suppoſition. He has ſent a Courier to Monſieur *de Chamillart*, to let him know he is in Want of every thing. He takes the Jeſuit's Bark for a Fever. I make no Doubt, my Lord, of your having heard from him. I don't know when his Courier will be ſent back. Every thing here proceeds very ſlowly.

Your Paſtoral Letter, though read over in a Hurry, has been greatly approved of. 'Tis impoſſible to take a better Method of combining Religion and Policy.

LETTER

LETTER CXL.

To Madame de la Viefville.

December 13, 1710.

THE Novice's Fault, about which you write me, is not to be over-looked, but what you ſay of the Spirit of the old Nuns, is a Matter of the greateſt Importance. I formerly diſcovered the ſame Spirit in our Claſs of grown-up Girls. It was impoſſible to reprimand one of them, without diſcovering in the reſt a great deal of Uneaſineſs, but it was a ſeditious Uneaſineſs, quite void of true Charity. It was neceſſary to look to this Evil in the younger Girls, and to inſpire them with a different Way of Thinking. The older Girls left the Houſe by Degrees, (a Happineſs you can't expect) and we are now quiet, and enjoy the Fruits of our Labours. When a Girl with us is made to do Pennance, the reſt don't inſult her; on the contrary they ſhare in her Affliction, they comfort her, they beſeech her to humble herſelf, to amend, and to neglect nothing to reconcile herſelf to her Superiors; they don't take upon themſelves to intercede for her. 'Tis impoſſible to be more united than they are, but 'tis an Union, not a Mutiny.

tiny. Every thing here contributes to the Happineſs of the Community in general, and of every Individual in particular, ſo that you would be charmed with the Harmony that reigns amongſt us.

Within Doors we are conſtantly recommending an entire Confidence in Confeſſors, accompanied with Sincerity, Submiſſion, and Reſpect. The Confeſſors, on their Part, conſtantly refer their Penitents to the Superiors, to the Miſtreſſes of the Novices, of the Claſſes, and of the Servants, and to the Rules of the Houſe. The Superiors know every thing, without making a Myſtery of any thing, or incurring the Hatred of thoſe they govern. The youngeſt Child here is perſuaded, that no Steps are taken with her but for her Advantage. There is not one among us that does not maintain the Authority of the Abbeſs, and ſhe maintains that of all the other Superiors. Our Abbeſs governs with Eaſe three hundred Girls.

Were I in your Place, I would have no more to do with the antient Nuns than my Duty required, but would endeavour to eſtabliſh the good Spirit, which I have juſt mentioned, among the younger Sort, the Penſioners, and the Novices. I believe 'tis the only Way to form a devout Community. I know one where this

Method

Method is employed, and there is great Reaſon to hope it will ſucceed.

I am afraid there is no changing the old Nuns, they were not educated in that Uprightneſs; nor is it in general ſufficiently recommended to young People. I have been told that there are very virtuous Women among them, but their Virtue is a Virtue to their own Taſte, which does not hinder them from neglecting a great many good Things, and doing a great many that deſerve Cenſure.

What Miſchief are they not guilty of, when they imbitter the Mind of this Girl you complain of, when they tell her ſhe ſuffers unjuſtly, when they blame the Abbeſs's Conduct, when they grieve her? How much good on the contrary would they not do, if they told the Delinquent they ſympathized in her Trouble, but that ſhe was in Fault, that ſhe had given bad Example, that ſhe ought to humble herſelf, and endeavour to appeaſe the juſt Anger of the Lady Abbeſs, in whoſe Perſon ſhe ſhould conſider that of our Lord, that ſhe has made a Vow of Obedience, that the keeping of ſuch a Vow cannot but coſt her ſome Uneaſineſs, and that this Victory over herſelf would be rewarded with new Graces. This Kind of Behaviour would ſoon

put

put Matters to rights, in a Houſe where the Spirit of God prevailed.

I was ever of your Opinion, that in Convents there can be no Medium; they are excellent Inſtitutions, when you live up to the Rules; and there are as many Intrigues carried on in them as at *Verſailles*, when the Parlours are left open, and a free Intercourſe of Letters permitted.

I don't think I could in your Place be ſo patient as you are; I would not ſuffer this Girl to go by herſelf into the Parlour, nor even in Company, except to her neareſt Relations. She ſhould write no Letters that I did not peruſe, nor receive any Packets but thro' my Hands. But I would take theſe Precautions without any Ceremony or Diſguiſe, as Meaſures that Regularity abſolutely require.

I can eaſily form a Judgment of the Perplexity you muſt be in, and ſincerely wiſh I could extricate you from it. I have given 200 Livres extraordinary to Mademoiſelle *d'Aumale*; 'tis a Trifle, but it's all that is in my Power.

I have ſeen your Confeſſor, who has greatly edified me. It would be Raſhneſs of me to judge ſo ſoon of him, ſince Men are not to be known at firſt Sight, but I thought I could perceive in him a great Fund of Prudence, Moderation, Uprightneſs, Piety, and Politeneſs. I mentioned

to him the Education of *St. Cyr*, with a Zeal which I know very well ſavoured of Indiſcretion. I wiſh I could communicate to you every thing God and our own Experience has made known to us upon that Head, and of which we are daily reaping the Advantages. He aſſures me the ſame Maxims and Practices have obtained at *Gomer-Fontaines*. I would give my Life to communicate the Plan of Education obſerved at *St. Cyr*, to all other religious Houſes. They would do a great deal more good than can be expected from us, as they have Girls to educate, that are entitled to better Eſtabliſhments.

You will find it a difficult Matter to ſqueeze Money out of Mr. *Demarets*. The Approach of Peace has not made it more plenty, nor will even the Concluſion of one for ſome Years; but 'tis a great Happineſs to have no more Evils to fear, and ſome Reaſon to hope Times may grow better.

You are quite in the right to make your little Girls do ſomething for the Houſe, provided you have at the ſame time Probity enough not to neglect their Education on that Account. 'Tis your Duty to educate them, to which however theſe little Services may contribute, as they tend to form them to Buſineſs, and conſequently more to their own Advantage than to yours.

LETTER CXLI.

To the Marquis de St. Mexant.

YOU might have ſome Reaſon to thank me, Sir, had I contributed to your Daughter's Merit, for I am perſuaded that as long as you live, you will have a great deal of Comfort in her. Her Senſe greatly ſurpaſſes her Years. Her Piety is ſo ſolid, that I make no Doubt of her reſiſting all the Temptations ſhe is going to be expoſed to in a corrupt World. She is both mild and polite, and knows how to behave, as if ſhe had been brought up in it. She is gay and complaiſant; and to ſpeak ſincerely, I don't know that ſhe has a ſingle Failing. If Eſtabliſhments depended upon Virtue, your Daughter would have a very extraordinary one; nor would ſhe be at a Loſs to fulfil its Obligations. Her Conduct would do infinite Honour to the Method of Education obſerved at *St. Cyr*, tho' in *her* it muſt be owned the Principles and Practices there inculcated found the happieſt Diſpoſition to be received and improved. You are not to look upon what I ſay of her as an idle Compliment, but as undiſguiſed Truth, which I tell

I tell you with a Degree of Pleaſure as that you ought to feel upon being made acquainted with ſo much Merit.

LETTER CXLII.

To Madame Dangeau.

I Know not, Madam, if any one is kind enough to let you know how we ſpend our Time here. In the Dutcheſs of *Burgundy*'s Apartment every one aims at Wit. They form Converſations that are infinitely pleaſing. They ſpeak of Logick, of Rhetorick, and Natural Philoſophy, and are for getting to the Bottom of Subjects, the very Names of which it would be happy for us we were Strangers to. Yeſterday the Princeſs was learning to frame an Argument. A Project is on Foot for forming an Academy of Women. It is to conſiſt of forty. There are twenty named already. May I venture to tell it you?— You are not of the Number; neither am I. But there are two of my Nieces for me, and among the firſt.

I read your Letter to the King, who immediately took the Meaning of it. He is perſuaded of Monſieur *Dangeau*'s Zeal, and depends likewiſe upon yours. 'Tis true he will accept the

Plate

Plate of ſuch as are ready to give it with a free Heart. But then the Manner of Proceeding on the Occaſion, muſt be firſt ſettled.

Give Madame *de Br.* the thirty Guineas you have of mine. I wiſh I could make Life agreeable to her. I am aſtoniſhed at all you do, and the Manner in which you do it. 'Tis a cruel Caſe to know that you are ſo near me, without being able to ſee you. This Circumſtance may truly be called *tantalizing*. I ſee no Inconvenience in your bringing Madame *de Courcillon* with you. You are no longer obliged to keep Meaſures. Divert yourſelf well, Madame; endeavour to have the Health of a Goddeſs as much as you already enjoy the Looks of one. *Flora* is in a very good Humour, but I cannot ſay ſo much of *Zephyrus*.

LETTER CXLIII.

To Madame de Glapion.

Fontainbleau, 1711.

I AM juſt arrived from *Avon*; I thought to ſtay there but *one* Hour, and I ſtaid *three*, for I went from Door to Door to pay my Viſits. I never, ſince I came to Court, ſaw more delightful Company. I beg the Ladies of *St. Lewis'*

Pardon

Pardon for ſaying ſo, but they have as yet ſome Connexions with the great World, and are more pert, and leſs ſimple than *Geffrey* and *Paien* *.

I can excuſe your being in Love, my dear Daughter, with Maréchal *de Villars*, but I am uneaſy in Regard to your Sentiments for Prince *Eugene*. 'Tis ſaid he is much piqued, and reſolved to maintain the Siege, but we ſhall cut off his Proviſions. We have taken more Spoils than was at firſt imagined. The Colours will ſoon be here. Rejoice and be chearful, my dear Daughters; you have been a long Time in Affliction.

Our Departure has been poſtponed to enjoy the Diverſion of Hunting, and other Amuſements ſuitable to this Weather. I am here without Pleaſure, without Liberty, without any Inclination but that of the Maſter †. Naturally I diſlike Stag-hunting, but my Affection for you is no way impaired by the Contradictions I meet with. *Mathurin Roch* ‡ cannot reconcile himſelf to my Ignorance, nor I to his Erudition. I already know all I can learn, and he is for learning ſtill more. He reads every thing from *Cani-*

* Peaſants of *Avon*.
† The King.
‡ School-maſter at *Avon*.

ſius

ſus * up to *Bellarmin*, and drowns my Children in an Ocean of Divinity. He aſſures me they never heard before a Word of what I taught them, yet I don't find they know the more for it. *Frances* has a Mind to marry, but can neither obtain the Conſent of her Friends, nor conquer her Paſſion. *Suſan* ſays, ſhe has not as yet ſeen half enough of her Sweet-heart. Yes, certainly I ſhall find it a difficult Matter to live without ſeeing the good Folks of *Avon*; I experience no Uneaſineſs among them, but what their Diſtreſs gives me. I find among them Probity, good Senſe, Truth, and Honour. I ſhall give you ſome ſtriking Inſtances of it, and perhaps enough to tire you. They don't *expreſs* themſelves ſo well as we do, but they *act* much better. Their Cows are recovering, yet they dare not as yet buy any. I received a Letter Yeſterday, in which I am told they are in great Pain about the King's Health and mine, on Account of the Mortality among the Cattle.

* Author of a little *Latin* Catechiſm, made uſe of in the *French* Schools.

LETTER

LETTER CXLIV.

To Madame de Peron.

Fontainbleau, Auguſt 15, 1711.

'TWAS impoſſible to do what you requeſted of me without expoſing you to an endleſs Train of Delays. 'Tis a Buſineſs not to be brought to a Concluſion, and I believe you would not like to have it to begin often. I added but few Words to your Memorial, becauſe I agreed to every thing, I knew every thing, and I approved every thing. I dare not ſpeak of the Inſtruments of Pennance. You may remember what I always ſaid of them to you. I ſhould be glad our Nuns wiſhed earneſtly to have them, and that they ſeldom obtained any. They may become great Saints merely by complying with their Duties, without having Recourſe to iron Girdles, and if they neglect their Duties, corporal Auſterities will never ſave them. They require a great deal of Tranquillity and Patience at the Head of their Claſſes, and were a Bracelet to hurt one of them in ſome very ſenſible Part, ſhe might loſe her Temper, and the poor Children would pay for it. If the Community reſembles the Picture my Siſter the Aſſiſtant gives

of

of it in her Letter, Sister *Radouay* will be obliged to canonize her. Your Assiduity at the Choir, your Fervor in Prayer, your sincere Union, your Chearfulness in Recreation, your Harmony in the Discharge of the several Employments; every thing, in fine, corresponds with my Wishes, and if Sister *Radouay* could read the Period that concerns her, she would see how sensible we are to praise; but I have no Thoughts of sending it to her, it would be too great a Temptation for her Self-love.

As to what the Fathers of your young Ladies write to them of their Families, you must instruct them not to think the better of themselves on that Account. You must tell them People are generally disposed to believe their Extraction to be better than their Neighbours, but that no one's bare Word will be taken for it.

If Sister *de Bouju* is as gay and as free at your Recreations, as she is in her Letter, you are too happy in possessing her; nothing can be more engaging than what she writes to me. If Sister *de Champigny*'s Conscience tallies with her Temper, God must be well pleased with her, and I shall be so too, if she keeps her Word in Regard to the Confidence she has promised to repose in me. Sister *de Radouay* has found Means to praise the whole Community in ten Lines; at least as

many of you as have been at the Infirmary, while ſhe ſerved there. Her Criticiſm turns on their Docility, their Submiſſion, and their Simplicity. At this Rate we ſhall degenerate into very inſipid Creatures. There is not one among them, even down to Siſter *de Launay*, that does not take upon herſelf to relate Wonders of the Houſe, and endeavour to enliven her Stile with ſome pretty Paſſages. As to Siſter de *Berval* ſhe has found the Way to compoſe a very entertaining Letter, by giving me an Account of the Building of the Work-houſe, of Caps, of the Coalman, of the Tinker, of Spits and Pots, of *Labourdin* *, and of the Hero Monſieur *de la Place* †. But ſhe finiſhes this grand Compoſition by a pretty ſublime Thought concerning the Inſtitute. Siſter *de Roney* muſt not think of putting me off with the Offer ſhe makes of acquainting me with all her Failings, I beg ſhe may ſend me an Account of them, and that too without conſulting Monſieur *de Treilh*. I did not know till now the Extent of Siſter *de Londe*'s Eloquence, I am charmed with what ſhe tells me of herſelf and the reſt of our Siſters. Siſter *de Roquemont* did not accuſtom me to long Diſſertations, and therefore I am very well ſatisfied with her little Letter,

* A Servant of the Houſe.

† The Architect.

and

and with her being ſatisfied herſelf with Siſter *Bauregard*. Siſter *de Bloſſet*, who hates the Plague of War more than that of Sickneſs, muſt beware of procuring us, by her Prayers, a Viſit here from the Small-pox. I beg you may let me know every thing you hear of that Diſtemper, which purſues us every where. It has made its Appearance at *Marli*, ſtill rages here and at *Verſailles*, and is grown more riſe at *Paris*. I am really at a Loſs to think where we can retire, if its Fury does not abate; and am under continual Alarms for the Duke of *Britanny* and his Brother. I have very little to ſay to you concerning my Health, about which I ſuppoſe Mademoiſelle *d'Aumale* writes to you more than enough. I enjoy myſelf pretty well in Town, and am there as often as I can. The Biſhop of *Meaux* * is here, in order to terminate, in Conjunction with the Dauphin, the Reconciliation between Cardinal *de Noailles* and the Biſhops of *Lucon*, *Rochel*, and *Gap*. I recommend this Affair to your Prayers, as it may Intereſt the Church. I embrace you, my deareſt Daughter, with the greateſt Tenderneſs, in Spite of all your Imperfections. How ſhall I behave at my Return, ſhould I find you anſwer the Deſcription

* Afterwards Cardinal *de Biſſi*.

that has been given me of you? You are not to form a Judgment of my *Leiſure* by the Length of this Letter, but of my *Friendſhip* for you.

LETTER CXLV.

To Madame de Glapion.

Fontainebleau, July 31, 1712.

MY Days, my dear Daughter, more diverſified indeed than yours, are yet more diſagreeable. I ſpend them between the Town and the Caſtle. At the Caſtle I receive Company; but what Company! I am beſieged by Women I deſpiſe, or by Men who don't like me. I ſee and hear Things which diſpleaſe or provoke; and keep a conſtant Watch over myſelf, in order to repreſs every Sally of Impatience, and to hinder thoſe about me from ſeeing I have any to repreſs. In Town I write, I read, I work, I pray; in ſhort, I enjoy a Calmneſs and Tranquillity very like joy. At Night, in reviewing the Tranſactions of the Day, how many Faults! ſome Sins! Vice avoided, but little Virtue practiſed.

For your Part, my dear Daughter, you can neither open your Lips, nor take a ſingle Step without doing ſome Good. This is evident from the Account you give me of the Houſe you now govern.

govern. 'Tis this Honour that renders you ſo ſerious; no Doubt we may expect more ſprightly Letters from you, when you have once got rid of ſo heavy a Burthen. *Marchiennes* holds out longer than was expected, but it muſt ſoon ſurrender. We have Meſſieurs *de Villars* and *de Monteſquion*'s Word for it, and likewiſe for a Quantity of Proviſions ſufficient to glut Madame *de Peron*'s Wiſhes. 'Tis ſaid, however, that Prince *Eugene* will not quit his Hold. He is ſtung to the Quick by the Skill of Maréchal *de Villars*, who gained a March upon him. We muſt wait to ſee if the *Dutch*, who formerly underſtood their Intereſts ſo well, will renounce their Principles out of a Compliment to his Paſſion. Adieu, my dear Daughter, take Care of your Health, and in endeavouring to gain the Hearts of your Children, let it be merely with a View of giving them to our only Maſter. It would be a Shame for our Superior not to be able to raiſe the Siege of *Landrecy*, by Dint of Prayer. Great Matters are to be expected from great Souls.

LETTER CXLVI.

To Madame de la Vieſville.

April 9, 1713.

I AM extremely ſenſible you cannot do at *Gomer Fontaines*, every thing that is done at *St. Cyr*; but you may borrow from it what is moſt eſſential, the ſolid Piety that is there inſpired. I ſhould be in great Pain about you on that Head, if I had not ſeen your Confeſſor, for you can do nothing without his Aſſiſtance.

It muſt be allowed that, as you keep your Penſioners but for a few Years, you cannot expect any great Aſſiſtance from the eldeſt, yet you muſt obtain as much as you can, and for that Purpoſe excite a proper Spirit of Emulation among them. There will always be ſome of them more forward than the reſt, and thoſe that can only ſpell may teach others their Alphabet.

As they generally remain with you ſo ſhort a Time, you ought to confine yourſelf to the moſt eſſential Branches of Education, ſuch as Reading, Writing, Arithmetick, and above all the Catechiſm, which you ought to explain thoroughly, with ſuitable Applications to their ſeveral Stations of Life.

You

You muſt educate your Tradeſmen's Daughter's as ſuch. They need no Poetry, nor any thing that is requiſite to make a Figure in Company. 'Tis not neceſſary for you to give them ſuch extenſive Views. Your chief Buſineſs muſt be to recommend to them the Practice of Family Duties, ſuch as Obedience to Huſbands, Tenderneſs for Children, Zeal in inſtructing their little Houſehold, Aſſiduity at the Pariſh Church on *Sundays* and Holidays, Modeſty in their Behaviour to thoſe who come to their Shops, and Probity in all their Dealings. You muſt adviſe them to pray to God to give them a good Confeſſor, to chooſe one with a View to their Salvation, and ſuffer themſelves to be conducted like Children. They muſt edify their Relations, their Friends, and their Neighbours; they muſt give good Advice, and a good Example. Tell them that Piety is no Enemy to Chearfulneſs, but, on the contrary, recommends itſelf by evincing that there is real and great Pleaſure in ſerving God.

Your Inſtructions, both private and publick, ſhould turn upon theſe Points. Speak to them in private, and little at a Time. This is the moſt important Duty of the firſt Miſtreſs. 'Tis in theſe private Converſations, you muſt attack their Vices. They'll hear every thing you have

to ſay with Patience, when there are no Witneſſes.

I have here a Girl who was at *St. Cyr*, but at preſent waits upon my Women. Nothing can equal her Virtue. She never loſes Sight of God; ſhe makes her Piety conſiſt in filling her Days with good Works; ſhe ſays, that the Service of our Neighbour is an excellent Prayer; ſhe leaves the Church as readily as ſhe goes there; ſhe ſays ſhe has learned all this at *St. Cyr*; ſhe is withal chearful to Admiration.

I ſhould not be ſurprized to ſee your old Nun under Madame *de Champlebon*. Our Claſſes are full of ſuch Examples. Siſter *Radouay* is there under Siſter *de Gruel*, whom perhaps ſhe educated, but moſt certainly received. 'Tis abſolutely neceſſary that the firſt Miſtreſs ſhould have the Charge of every thing, that none but herſelf ſhould ſpeak in private, grant Favours, diſtribute Rewards, inflict Puniſhments. All the reſt of the Miſtreſſes muſt conform themſelves to her Way of Thinking, refer the Children to her for the Direction of their Conſciences, and not permit them to entertain too much Affection for themſelves. Otherwiſe every Miſtreſs would have her own Girls, and Confuſion and Diſorder would unavoidably follow. Our Ladies find this Subor-

Subordination to anſwer; their Virtue and their good Senſe have made it eaſy to them.

I long to ſee you once more before I leave this World, and would be glad you brought *Champlebon* with you. This Viſit might be of ſome Service to you; I ought not to propoſe it merely to gratify myſelf.

I ſee great Difficulties in ſuiting your Diſcourſe to the different Conditions of the Girls you are to ſpeak to.

Tho' all Souls are equally precious in the Sight of God, yet 'tis certain the Daughter of a Gentleman requires a more extenſive Education than the Daughter of a Vine-dreſſer. Don't be afraid of explaining to them the Difference of Conditions; tell them, that God is the King of all Ranks, that in Heaven Virtues alone will have the Preference, that the moſt pious of his Subjects is the Subject he likes beſt. When the young Lady of Quality ſubmits to comb the Head of the little Country Girl *, the latter will chearfully wait upon the former, and allow

* Madame *de Maintenon* had herſelf practiſed what ſhe here recommends. It appears by her *Memoirs*, that ſhe often came to *St. Cyr*, by Six in the Morning; and there, to inſtruct and animate her Nuns, ſubmitted to render the young Ladies all the little Services they could expect from a Waiting-woman, that, in particular, of combing their Hair.

that ſhe is born to do it. You are to make a Difference in Educations. Tradeſmen's Daughters have no Occaſion to know a great deal more than what every Chriſtian ought to know; but Girls of Family muſt have other Accompliſhments; they muſt be made to ſpeak with Grace and Propriety, and be chid when they give Way to Inattention. For the others, 'tis no great Matter, provided they underſtand their Language, and ſpeak it well enough to be underſtood, and to practice the Duties of their Condition. It would be ridiculous to ſee Verſes in the Hands of a Vine-dreſſer's Daughter, tho' they are proper for young Ladies. Speak to the Daughters of Tradeſmen concerning Probity in their Dealings, of Weights and of Meaſures, of the Profit they may lawfully take; a Species of Advice that would be loſt upon the reſt.

We have often experienced the good Effects of a juſt Subordination; and Examples of Submiſſion and Obedience make a deeper Impreſſion than Words. 'Tis to this we are indebted for that good Spirit which prevails at *St. Cyr*, in Conſequence of which a Girl of twelve repeats her Catechiſm to one of ſeven, as readily as ſhe would do it to the Superior herſelf, and they teach each other, without Diſtinction of Age, every thing they know; for on all Occaſions we

inſpire them with juſt Notions, by ſhewing them how mean it is not to be willing to benefit by the Knowledge of another, becauſe, perhaps, a few Years younger. We ever recommend Things to them according to their juſt Value; Piety above all Things, in the next Place good Senſe, and then the other good Qualities of the Mind in Proportion to their Uſefulneſs. We never ſhew any Diſtinction to the mere Gifts of Nature; Virtue and Wiſdom alone engroſs all our Eſteem. At the ſame Time we praiſe them for repeating Verſes well, or for ſinging with a good Grace, we tell them that the moſt profligate Actreſſes of the Opera greatly ſurpaſs them. Thoſe who have none of theſe exterior Accompliſhments, are as much cheriſhed as thoſe who have, and thoſe who behave well are alone diſtinguiſhed. If good Senſe governs all your Actions, the Children will not fail to learn it from you.

Nothing can be more eſſential in the Education of your Children, than that they ſhould always behold in you Juſtice, Diſintereſtedneſs, and an equal Care of the moſt forbidding as well as the moſt amiable. Children have Senſe ſufficient to diſtinguiſh the Virtues and the Vices of thoſe who inſtruct them. A Child of Seven ſhould be treated as rationally as a Girl of twenty.

'Tis

'Tis only by expecting a great deal from their Reaſon, we can pretend to forward it.

*** In order to throw ſome Light upon this and other Letters of Madame *de Maintenon*, it may not be improper to obſerve, that there are no ſuch Diſtinctions in *France* as thoſe of Nobility and Gentry. Every Gentleman there is Noble, but none are admitted to rank as Gentlemen, but ſuch as can prove their being illuſtriouſly deſcended, or have filled certain Military or Civil Employments. Sometimes indeed the King grants Patents of Nobility, as a Reward of extraordinary Merit in the Arts and Sciences, in Trade, and even in Manufactures. In common Diſcourſe a Peer in *France* is called *un Seigneur*, that is a Lord, and a Gentleman who is no Peer, *un ſimple Gentilhomme*, or *un Gentilhomme*. All the reſt of the People are called *Roturiers*. There are no middling Stations in the Eye of the Law, ſuch as Eſquire and Gentleman in *England*. The Nobility in *France* have ſeveral ſubſtantial Priviledges, and very ſeldom marry into the Families of the *Roturiers*. The *Roturiers* of any Fortune, eſpecially thoſe in Trade, or who live in Towns and Cities are in general called *Bourgeois*. Merchants in particular are called *Negotiants*, and Shop-keepers or Retailers *Marchands*.

LETTER

LETTER CXLVII.

To Madame de Glapion.

Fontainbleau, September 14, 1714.

IF one that is naturally mild and polite, and has been long practiſed in the Exerciſe of every Virtue, yields notwithſtanding to Impatience, gueſs, my dear Child, whereabout I muſt be; I who am naturally haſty and proud, over-whelmed with Contradictions in great and ſmall Matters, condemned to a Life I hate, debarred the Practice of every Act of Piety, and ſuffering almoſt continually in Body and Mind. Siſter *de Leinemarc* has wrote me a Letter full of Mildneſs, full of good Senſe; in a Word, a Letter like herſelf. In my Opinion, Madame *de la Mairie* muſt be very happy in having with her *de Mornai* and your Niece. I am a great Admirer of theirs, but if you would have me continue ſo, don't let them know it. We are in the utmoſt Impatience for News from *Barcelona*. I have got there the Chevalier *de Caylus*, a little Hero, in a fine Humour to get his Brains knocked out. I ſhould be greatly afflicted were any thing to happen to him, and his poor Mother would break her Heart. Adieu, my dear Daughter, I am

juſt

juſt going to Confeſſion, and therefore not diſpoſed to ſay any thing that could amuſe you.

LETTER CXLVIII.

To the Princeſs des Urſins *.

Fontainbleau, Sept. 17, 1714.

WE ſhare your Uneaſineſs, Madam, about the Siege of *Barcelona*, and wait with the utmoſt Impatience to hear the Succeſs of the general Aſſault that was intended to be given about this Time. I believe you are no longer anxious about the Dauphin's Health. 'Tis true, he ſtill thinks but too much of the Dauphineſs. He is indeed handſomer than ſhe was; but he has, too, all the Graces of her Mind, which are more valuable far than Beauty. Were all our Miniſters bleſſed with as ſolid an Underſtanding as the Chancellor, Buſineſs would be attended with very little Difficulty. I every Day think better and better of him. You and I, Madam, live, if I may ſay it, in the Sphere of Revolutions. The Cardinal *del Giudice* paſſed with us all, in this Place,

* This Lady's Hiſtory is well worth the Reader's Peruſal. He may find it in thoſe Memoirs of Madame *de Maintenon*, which we have ſo frequently had Occaſion to mention.

for

for a Man of great good Senſe, and ſeemed to have unfeigned Affection for the King his Maſter, the moſt tender Attachment to the Prince of *Aſturias*, and for yourſelf, Madam, all imaginable Eſteem. He ſeemed alſo to entertain the juſteſt Notions of his Majeſty's Merit and Goodneſs, and appeared very zealous to maintain a good Correſpondence between our two Kings. But all this, Madam, ſerved only to prepare us for the News of his Diſgrace. Maréchal *Villeroi*, who was then upon ill Terms with his Maſter, unhappy, and as it were in a State of Baniſhment, is now loaded with Honours and Marks of Confidence, which cannot but charm him in Point of Friendſhip, and ſerve beſides to make him richer than any other of our firſt Nobility. We expect him here *Thurſday* the 20th of this Month. I believe Maréchal *de Villars* will arrive To-day, flushed with his Succeſs, and ſtill in love with Prince *Eugene*, but withal mortified at not having ſucceeded Monſieur *de Beauvilliers*. Our poor King and Queen of *England* alone have no Reſolutions to boaſt of; and that turbulent Nation has now been at reſt theſe ſix-and-twenty Years. They will fall out among themſelves perhaps, as ſoon as they get a King, and they are to have one in a few Days. The Deſcription you give me of the Queen of

Spain

Spain is very ambiguous. One Word, when you have ſeen her, will do to draw her Picture. *Latin*, *German*, *Spaniſh*, and *Engliſh*, Dancing and Painting are agreeable Talents, when united with good Senſe and Piety. When they are not, very little Value is to be ſet upon them: In this, I believe, you think with me.

The Princeſs *d'Epinoy* returned yeſterday to *Paris*, in order to marry Mademoiſelle *de Verchis*. She is to bring her back here, firmly reſolved to keep her conſtantly under her own Eyes, and not let her ramble at Will about our Court. She has Courage enough to abide by this Reſolution; a Circumſtance that is very uncommon, tho' not without Example. Monſieur *d'Antin* has a Cabinet in the Garden of *Diana*, always ready to receive as many as pleaſe to come to it. The Elector plays there every Day; and our Princeſſes, I mean the Dutcheſs and her Daughters, every Night. The Dutcheſs of *Berry* is almoſt conſtantly ſhut up at her own Houſe, and expreſſes no great Pleaſure at being viſited. The Dutcheſs of *Orleans* holds out ſtill, and her Pregnancy agrees very well with her. Yeſterday ſhe did me the Honour of a Viſit, and played at Piquet; but had not a Word to ſay to me. The great Princeſs of *Conti* receives in her Apartment all the grave Perſonages of the Court, of both

Sexes.

Sexes. The King, who is in perfect Health, is more in love than ever with this Place, where he has built one of the fineſt Apartments imaginable. Such are the Pleaſures by which we endeavour to ſhorten this Dream of Life! I ſhall not, Madam, give you any Account of myſelf, as I ſhould thereby ſtand expoſed to your Repreſentations. You will eaſily gueſs what I mean. Be perſuaded, I beſeech you, of my Reſpect and Attachment for you.

LETTER CXLIX.

To Madame de Glapion.

Fontainebleau, September 26.

I AM *St. Francis de Sales'* very humble Servant; but ſhall never agree with him, that 'tis harder to bear with ourſelves, than with others. We carry about us a very zealous Defender of our Intereſts, the *Heart*; but no one to plead for our poor Neighbour, who is ſo often inſupportable. This good Saint did not know what it was to be cooped up in a Convent, or torn to Pieces by Courtiers; he never was the Witneſs, the Martyr, or the Victim of the Iniquities of the World.

For this Reaſon, my dear Daughter, I conſider as a Proof of the greateſt Courage, the Reſolution

ſolution you formed during your Retreat; but you will not abide by it. You have already, I am ſure, ſtumbled more than once. As to your Friends at Court, they will never be in a Condition to give you any Trouble. You have now nothing to ſtruggle with but Prejudice, Obſtinacy, and Dulneſs. How I envy your Happineſs! Did you but ſee what paſſes here, you would die with Joy at your own Situation, or with Grief at ours. We are obliged to behold Murders committed in cold Blood, Envy without Cauſe, Treachery without Remorſe, Avarice that knows no Bounds, Deſpair in the midſt of Happineſs, Meanneſs dignified with the Name of Greatneſs of Soul. But no more! I cannot think of it without Emotion.

No, my dear Daughter, God will never condemn your Friendſhip for me. It is impoſſible to ſhew more Affection than Monſieur *Beſſe* has done. Madame *de Caylus* has been pretty much out of Order, but the King holds up very well. His Zeal encreaſes from Day to Day, in Spite of all the Oppoſition he meets with. There remain no longer any Hopes of an Accommodation. Cardinal *de Noailles'* Affair will not ſuffer by it. The King will ſend to *Rome* to confer with the Pope on the propereſt Meaſures to reduce this Prelate. Here is another

Friend

Friend to be ſacrificed! Pray for the Succeſs of this Undertaking, but without Fear or Anxiety. God will not abandon his Church, or me. Thoſe who hope in him, ſhall never be confounded. My *Health* is in a tottering Condition; my *Faith* as ſtrong as ever.

LETTER CL.

To the ſame.

YOU ought to be very careful in avoiding all unneceſſary Expences. The Merit of your Oeconomy is very different from that of the Oeconomy of other religious Houſes, who ſave with a View of ſupporting or of aggrandizing themſelves, whereas the Ladies of *St. Lewis* have in that Reſpect nothing to fear or to wiſh for. The King has already done great Things for them, and if there is any Thing ſtill wanting to complete the Foundation, he will do it; or if he ſhould not, his Succeſſors certainly will. He has in his great Wiſdom ſecured you from any Pretexts of Avarice or Intereſt. You can neither build nor purchaſe, ſo that your Oeconomy can only tend to enable you to give Alms, and with this View you ſhould adminiſter your Reve-

nues in the moſt frugal manner. All your Savings belong to the Poor. The portioning of poor Girls, or fixing them in Convents, are the Works of Charity, which your Founder has enjoined you.

Baniſh therefore the Spirit of Intereſt, which the Devil makes uſe of to pervert the greateſt Saints. A prudent Adminiſtration of your Revenues is neceſſary to the Support of your Houſe, yet a ſteddy Compliance with your Duties is of far greater Importance. It would be much eaſier to repair the Blunders of a Steward than the Faults of a Miſtreſs of the Claſſes.

Inſpire our Siſters with juſt Notions concerning the Nature of dying to the World. Nuns ſometimes riſe from under the Pall, as much alive to themſelves as before. I am not ſurprized at their continuing to have ſome Failings, ſince Perfection is the Work of one's whole Life; but I ſhould be glad they did not retain the Spirit of the World, that they did not take Pleaſure in beholding it, that they thought of their Friends only to pray for them; that they would not appear in ſuch Tranſports when their Relations come in Coaches to viſit them, nor in ſuch Deſpair when they come a-foot, nor ſo uneaſy when they meet with any Misfortune. A great many Nuns don't thoroughly underſtand the Maxims

of

of the Goſpel. They are more ſenſible than Worldings themſelves in regard to Rank, Pleaſure, Riches and Favour. They muſt have a Woman of Quality for their Abbeſs, preferably to one who would conduct them to God; they cabal for the Honour of being her Favourite; in a Word, their whole Demeanour ſhews that they ſet a greater Value upon Grandeur and Riches, than upon that Obedience and Poverty they ſo ſolemnly vowed to obſerve.

LETTER CLI.

To the ſame.

September 11, 1716.

I Slept well laſt Night, and am now in a Condition to ſuffer more Uneaſineſs. Our great Man * forms ſtrange Projects. You know what the firſt was, and how ill it ſucceeded. Here's a ſecond. He wants to renew my Blood, and change me into another Creature, by a long Courſe of mild and light Aliments. At leaſt it will be no hard Matter for him to reduce me to a State of Infancy. I ſee nothing real in his Schemes, but that they tend to ſeperate us, and to deprive us even of that poor Comfort of ſuf-

* Monſieur *Beſſe*, her Phyſician.

fering

fering together. Thoſe about me had a Mind to impoſe a little, in Regard to your preſent Situation, but I have lived too long not to look upon the worſt News as the moſt certain. I offer you then chearfully to God, tho' *St. Cyr*, which would have a Loſs in you, is ſtill very near my Heart *. Were God to accept my Offer! Methinks I could get myſelf carried to your Cell, but Decency will not allow it. It would be ſaid, that I could muſter up Strength enough to *viſit you*, tho' I had not enough to *go to Church*. Let us therefore do ourſelves Violence for ſome Days longer. I have been ſo ill ever ſince you fell ſick, that one would imagine my Life depended on yours. Be careful of yourſelf; let the Intereſt I take in your Health, render you the more anxious to preſerve it.

* Madame *de Glapion* was then Superior of *St. Cyr*.

LETTER

LETTER CLII.

To the ſame.

St. Cyr, December 27, 1717.

YOU make thoſe extremely uneaſy who unfeignedly love you. I beſeech you, by our Friendſhip, not to ſpeak this Day to more than one Perſon.— Shall I die e'er the leſs for it, you aſk me?— You will die the later; and every Moment of your Life is of great Value to me. I think myſelf bound in Conſcience, independent of my Affection for you, to do every thing in my Power to preſerve you. You are as unreaſonable on this Head, as I am haſty upon every other. How can you flatter yourſelf with being able to obſerve, at once, all the Rules of a ſimple Nun, and diſcharge all the Duties of a Superior. The ſoundeſt and moſt vigorous Conſtitution would ſink under ſuch a Burthen. You have little Health, a vaſt Employment, an ardent Deſire of ſacrificing yourſelf to it, a Facility in doing good, which even your Humility cannot hide from you. Preſerve yourſelf therefore for this good Work you take ſo much Delight in. Are you not more neceſſary to the well-being of our Inſtitute, than to the due Celebration

tion

tion of the Morning Office? Do you think that our late Biſhop of *Chartres* and the pious Archbiſhop of *Rouen*, ſuffered nothing for eating Meat on Days of Abſtinence in the Face of their Dioceſe? They judged it was fitter for them to feed and inſtruct their Flock, than to comply with a Precept that, by impairing their Healths, interfered with their more eſſential Duties. No one Perſon is ſufficient to every thing, and you are not to attempt more than others for Seven Days together with Impunity. The Care of your Health will be itſelf a good Work, and contribute to ſtrengthen our Eſtabliſhment. I cannot reconcile your Zeal for an Inſtitute to which your Life is ſo uſeful, with this Contempt of Life; nor your Friendſhip for myſelf, with the Alarms you give me.

LETTER CLIII.

To the ſame.

St. Cyr, November 21, 1718.

'TIS owing to the Alarms given me by your too great Diſcretion, that I did not ſend theſe hundred Livres a Fortnight ſooner to Mademoiſelle *de Boiſſy*. I can't forget her Sentiments for her Father. Give her therefore, my dear

dear Daughter, the Joy of obliging him ſhe loves; and ſince you are ſo deſirous I ſhould enjoy ſome Pleaſure, partake of that I feel in giving ſome to this Child. I think myſelf obliged to you for being better To-day. No Recollection can be ſo meritorious, as of what you do. You ſuper-intend this whole Houſe; you maintain Regularity in it; you form the Miſtreſs of the Claſſes. However, I allow you to make a Retreat, provided you oblige yourſelf to viſit me every Day during its Continuance. The Biſhop of *Chartres* ſets out at five. I beg you may give his Chaplain 500 Livres: 'Tis for the next Year's Penſion of two young Gentlemen at his Seminary, who may poſſibly be left upon his Hands. Collect as much as you pleaſe, for depend upon it you will one Day or other very quietly give me up all theſe uſeleſs Papers*. There are ſome of them you will not touch, but with the moſt delicate Prudence.

* This Expectation of Madame *de Maintenon* proved the Means of ſaving a great many Papers.

LETTER CLIV.

To the same.

IN the *Doctor's* Opinion I am very well; in my *own* very ill; so weak that I can't get out of Bed. I ate a Bason of Soup without any Appetite, merely because I thought it was good for me, and found in it all the Insipidity Madame *d'Hudicour* used to complain of. Shan't I see you? The Prince *d'Harcourt* has been found dead in his Bed.

I am told that the Report of the Duke of *Maine*'s Innocence gains Credit more and more, and that the whole Blame will fall upon *Malezieux*. But 'tis expected that the Regent will forgive every thing as soon as he has proved that his Suspicions were well founded.

I approve of every thing; know not what ails me; have no Fever; my Cough abated; sleep very well; but quite exhausted. Bring Sister *du Peron* with you. There is no Time to lose, if you desire to make any more use of me.

LETTER

LETTER CLV.

To Monſieur de Glapion.

St. Cyr, December 15, 1718.

'TIS impoſſible, Sir, that one bleſſed with a Father like yours, ſhould want a good Education, and you cannot do better than imitate him in every thing. You will find in him all the Principles and Practices of a good Chriſtian, united with that Politeneſs and Knowledge of human Life requiſite to form an accompliſhed Courtier. To theſe good Qualities endeavour to add all the Learning you can acquire in the reſpective Studies neceſſary to the Profeſſion you intend to embrace. Had you a monaſtick Life in View, I ſhould adviſe you to be ſatisfied with very little Learning. A great deal of Piety, and a total Ignorance of the World, would, under that Circumſtance, be propereſt for you. But ſecular Prieſts are often obliged to have Connections with it, for which Reaſon I could wiſh that you made a good Uſe of the Leſſons your Father can give you. Men of Senſe do not readily put up with ſuch as have nothing but your Latin and College Jeſts to recommend them; and it often happens, that the Advantage we Worldlings

might enjoy by converſing with the Clergy, is conſiderably leſſened by that Kind of Behaviour in ſome of its Members. Your Letter, in my Opinion, is very exact, and ſtrictly conformable to all the Rules of what may be called good Writing; but to Perſons of Taſte, more Simplicity had been more pleaſing. You might have remembered, that 'twas to a Woman you were writing. Your Heart overflows with Love and Gratitude; and I am ſatisfied with your having ſuch Sentiments for me. But there was no need to make Uſe of gigantick Terms to convince me of it, or of Expreſſions more ſuited to a Declamation than to a Letter. Your Father and your Siſter will direct you better than I can, how to write; but I thought proper to ſay thus much, in order to give you a Proof of my Friendſhip: juſt as I ſhould have done to a Child of my own. Aſſure yourſelf of my remaining conſtantly the ſame. When you are old enough to be conſidered as a Man, I ſhall conclude in a more regular manner.

LETTER CLVI.

To Madame de Glapion.

'TIS to no Purpoſe I cry out, that nothing ails me, and that I have got an excellent Appetite.

When far worſe in Health, *Fagon* did not refuſe
Any Vict'als ſo'er my Diſcretion might chuſe;
And now for a Trifle *St. Cyr* joins with *Beſſe*,
E'en of ſorry ſick-broth to deny me a Meſs—
Oh cruel Fate! ("Almighty Power".)
For *Want* to periſh at Four-ſcore.

Let me therefore have, my dear Daughter, what I call for. Have you a Mind Poſterity ſhould ſay

Lo! this was ſhe, who, with a Chriſtian Care,
Maintained ſo many Children at *St. Cyr*;
Yet ſaw herſelf, alaſs! condemned to Want
That Bread, her Bounty did to others grant.

ANSWER.

Let *Beſſe* at *Glapion* be in Rage,
You muſt prevail, and drink and eat,
In Spite of each *Faſt-preaching* Sage.
What! *you* to die for Want of Meat!
Ah! the chief Pride your deareſt Children have,
Is to give up their Lives, if yours 'twould ſave.

Madame

Madame de MAINTENON's ADVICE TO THE Dutcheſs of *Burgundy* *.

THE Fear of God is the Beginning of Wiſdom; and the Love of God is the Accompliſhment of the Law.

Theſe Words, Madam, are the Oracle of the Holy Ghoſt, in a Book you ſhould never be tired of reading. Profane Books inſpire us with Pride, and ſerve to feed Curioſity; Paſſions dangerous to our Sex, in Proportion as they encreaſe our Knowledge; whereas the Holy Scriptures inſpire with Humility thoſe they inſtruct. But

* This Princeſs was Daughter to the Duke of *Savoy*, and Mother to the preſent King of *France*.

But 'tis not enough the Underſtanding ſhould be convinced, the Heart muſt, at the ſame Time, contract a Taſte for Piety.

Let then this Piety be ſolid, upright, enlightened; ſolid by being the Rule of all your Actions; upright by making you always prefer the Obligations of your Station to every particular Devotion; enlightened by inſtructing you in every thing you ought to know, in order to work out your own Salvation, and contribute to that of others by your Example.

You love Joy, Eaſe, and Pleaſure. Believe me, who have taſted all three, there is neither Joy, Eaſe, nor Pleaſure to be found, but in ſerving God. Vice is a hideous Monſter. We cannot dedicate ourſelves too early to God. The bleſſed Virgin, 'tis ſaid, offered herſelf when ſhe was but three Years old; the King offered you to God from the Moment he

She uſed to ſay, that theſe Counſels had been the Means of ſaving her the Commiſſion of many Faults, and a great deal of Uneaſineſs. *Lewis* XIV. thought them ſo excellent, that, after the Dutcheſs of *Burgandy*'s Death, he ſpoke in the following Terms to Madame *de Maintenon*, on her offering to take them out of the Princeſs's Apartment: *Theſe, Madam, belong to the Children; ſurely my Family ought to have ſomething of your Example; your high Rank gives you an Opportunity of doing a great deal of Good, and Edification is the chief.*

firſt ſaw you. Without Doubt our Life belongs to him who gave it; would you beſtow it on God's Enemy?

Shun Vanity and Idleneſs. Above all Things avoid Sin. 'Tis an eaſy Matter to fall into Vice, but very hard to get the better of it. Night and Day conſtantly meditate on the Divine Law, engrave it deeply on your Heart, imitate your Maſter and your Pattern; ſacrifice every thing to Truth and Virtue.

Love the Church, which is the Aſſembly of the Faithful, and reſpect its Miniſters. Countenance People of Virtue, and encourage good Works. Declare yourſelf openly againſt all Innovations in Religion, ſuch as Janſeniſm and Quietiſm; but make yourſelf ſufficiently acquainted with them, to be able to ſhun their Errors. Keep firm hold of the Holy See; 'tis the Center of Catholiciſm.

Let your Piety be ſimple, ſubmiſſive, plain, and humble, according to *St. Paul*'s Advice to Women. Frequent the Sacraments with Joy and Confidence. Make Choice of a good Confeſſor, and ſuffer yourſelf to be conducted by him in every good Work: 'Tis upon this Occaſion we are to be ſimple like Doves. Change him for another, ſhould he adviſe any thing that were bad: It is then we are to be prudent

like Serpents. Follow the Church's Spirit in all her Solemnities. Expect and ſigh for the Coming of our Lord during *Advent*. Receive him at *Chriſtmaſs*: Adore him with the Shepherds and with the Kings: Offer yourſelf up entirely to him. Purify yourſelf with the bleſſed Virgin: Obſerve, as ſhe did, every religious Practice. Mortify yourſelf in Lent by Abſtinence and Faſting, by longer Prayers, by more Solitude and Retirement from the World. Die with your Redeemer on *Good-Friday*. Riſe with him to a new Life at *Eaſter*. Aſcend in Spirit to Heaven at the Aſcenſion, by looſening your Affections from earthly Concerns. Expect, ſigh for, and receive the Holy Ghoſt at *Whitſuntide*; and endeavour after the ſame Diſpoſitions the Apoſtles manifeſted, for the Glory of *their* Maſter, who is alſo *yours*. Adore the bleſſed Sacrament during the Octave, when the Church expoſes it on her Altars. In the Courſe of the Year, ſolemnize the Feſtivals of the Saints; and be particularly devout to the bleſſed Virgin. Once more, I beſeech you, love the holy Scriptures; make a proper Uſe of all you underſtand; with Humility *adoring* even what you do *not*. Study *The* Imitation of Jeſus Chriſt*, and the *Pſalms*. Read *the Works of St. Francis de Sales*. Recollect yourſelf often, and conceive of yourſelf as in the Pre-

* *Thomas à Kempis.*

ſence

fence of God, even in the midſt of the moſt numerous Court.

Never deceive yourſelf with the Hopes of enjoying perfect Happineſs; the whole Earth does not produce it; and if it did, the Court would be the laſt Place to find it in.

Greatneſs is attended with its peculiar Mortifications; and thoſe often more cruel than what are felt by Perſons in humble Stations. In private Life People often accuſtom themſelves to Diſappointments; at Court never.

Our Sex are ſtill more liable to ſuffer, as being ever in a State of Dependance. Be neither concerned at this Dependance on a Huſband, nor aſhamed of it; nor of any of thoſe that ſubſiſt according to the Order Providence has eſtabliſhed.

Let the Duke of *Burgundy* be your beſt Friend, and your only Confident. Take *his* Advice; give him *yours*; be both of you but one Heart, one Soul.

Expect not however, by this Union, to ſecure perfect Peace: the beſt Marriages are thoſe where Man and Wife ſuffer in their Turns, one from the other, with Mildneſs and Patience. There never yet was one free from Contradictions.

Be complaiſant, but without ſetting too great a Value upon your Complaiſance. Bear with

thoſe

thoſe Failings that depend upon Habit, Conſtitution, and Humour, the Difference of Taſtes and Opinions. 'Tis your Duty to ſubmit; it is by ſubmitting to the Duke of *Burgundy* you may expect to gain an Aſcendant over him. Lean always upon yourſelf as much as you can, upon him never.

Flatter not yourſelf with a Return of Friendſhip equal to your own: Men in general are leſs tender than Women: and too much Delicacy in Friendſhip muſt unavoidably fate you to Unhappineſs. It is a Sort of Commerce in which we muſt lay out more than we receive.

Pray to Heaven that you may never be permitted to be a Slave to Jealouſy. Imagine not that a Huſband is to be reclaimed by Complaints or Reproaches, or by making Life uneaſy to him. Mildneſs and Patience are the Means to be employed on this Occaſion. Impatience ſowers and alienates the Heart. Mildneſs recovers it when loſt. But I hope the Duke will never give you Cauſe of Affliction this Way.

You muſt not, becauſe you make a Sacrifice of your own Will, pretend that your Huſband ſhould ſacrifice his. Men are ſtill more ſelf-willed than Women, as they are brought up under leſs Reſtraint. They are Tyrants by Nature. They are for having their full Swing of

Pleaſure

Pleaſure and Liberty, at the ſame Time that they expect Women ſhould renounce both. Trouble not yourſelf to examine if their Pretenſions are well grounded; let it ſuffice you, that they are eſtabliſhed; Men have the Authority in their own Hands; and nothing for us remains but to ſuffer, and obey.

Speak, write, eat, think, as if you had a thouſand Witneſſes. Depend upon it, that one Time or other, every thing comes to Light. It is dangerous to commit any thnig to Paper.

Never tell another that which, if repeated, may do you any Prejudice. Aſſure yourſelf that the beſt kept Secrets are kept only for a Time, and that there is no Country in which People are guilty of greater Indiſcretions than in this, where every thing is tranſacted in a myſterious manner.

Love your Children, and ſee them often; 'tis the moſt becoming Employment for the Princeſs as well as the Peaſant. Sow in their Hearts the Seeds of every Virtue; and while you inſtruct them, ſeriouſly conſider, that on their Education depends the Happineſs of a Nation that deſerves the Love of its Princes. Shew yourſelf to the Publick as much as your Station will in Decency permit. You never will be loved by making yourſelf inacceſſible.

Do all that lies in your Power to baniſh Vanity, Immodeſty, Luxury; but above all Calumny, Detraction, offenſive Raillery, and every thing contrary to Chriſtian Charity.

Eſpouſe no one's Paſſions; 'tis your Duty to moderate their Paſſions, and not to be governed by them. Conſider thoſe as your beſt Friends, who take moſt Pains to make you love Peace, Lenity, and Forgiveneſs: And for the contrary Reaſon, never liſten to ſuch as would incenſe you againſt others, with whatever Appearance of Zeal or Reaſon they may cover their Intereſt or Reſentment.

Be always upon your Guard againſt the vain, the intereſted, the ambitious, the vindictive. The Converſation of ſuch can only do you Prejudice.

Never expoſe yourſelf to the Apprehenſions of being confronted. Whenever you take upon you to give Advice, let it be good. Excuſe the abſent; accuſe no one. Once more let me adviſe you, never to eſpouſe the Paſſions of Courtiers: You will thereby, indeed, render yourſelf leſs agreeable in the Time of their Fury; but when the Fit is over, they will eſteem you. A Princeſs ought to have no Party, but upon all Occaſions ſhould endeavour to eſtabliſh Peace.

Sanctify

Sanctify every Virtue by acting from one invariable Motive, the Desire of pleasing God.

Love the State, love the Nobility, who are the Support of it. Love the People. Protect the Peasants, in Proportion to your Credit, and relieve them to the best of your Power. Love your Domesticks; study to induce them to serve God; make their Fortunes, but let it never be considerable. Satisfy neither their Vanity nor their Avarice; and let your Wisdom set those Bounds to their Desires which their own Moderation ought to fix. In protecting one that is known to you, recollect the Injury you may probably occasion to another whose Merit you are unacquainted with.

Be vigilant not to be a Slave to Pleasure; Christians should know how to live without it; especially in your Station, attended as it is with constant Restraint and Uneasiness. Learn therefore to restrain yourself, and to suffer.

Let not the Emotions of your Heart command your Countenance. Princes are never without Observers; appear therefore mild, equal, moderately gay. Let the World see that you are capable too of Friendship: Is your Friend sick; hide not your Concern for her; is her Life despaired of; testify your Affliction.

Princes ſeldom have any other Maxim preached to them than that of Diſſimulation; 'tis a very falſe one; and often proves the Occaſion of taking wrong Steps. I ſhould chuſe to recommend a diſcreet Frankneſs.

Be compaſſionate to the Diſtreſſed. God has been pleaſed to make you a great Woman, merely to beſtow upon you the Happineſs of doing Good. Conſider that the Opportunity of ſerving others, and of making them happy, is the true Indemnification for the Fatigues, the Troubles, the Reſtraints, inſeparable from your Station.

Be compaſſionate to thoſe who ſollicit your Intereſt to obtain Favours; but beware of importuning thoſe who have the Power to give or diſtribute them.

Never embark in any Intrigue, whatever Glory or Intereſt People may pretend to make you perceive in it. Love your Relations, but let *France* alone be your Country. The *French* will love you only in Proportion as you love them.

Beware of that Fondneſs which you have to appear witty. The Diſplay of too much Wit is apt to mortify thoſe who have but little. It will ſerve to procure you the Hatred of the greateſt Number, and leſſen you in the Eſteem of People of Senſe.

It is a viſible Mark of Predeſtination, to paſs from one Tribulation to another, and every Day to carry our Croſs. And thus, Madam, you are certainly predeſtinated, for you will have much to ſuffer. You are the firſt Woman in the World *; but let me not flatter you, you are, for that very Reaſon, the moſt unhappy.

* There was no Queen in *France* at this Time, unleſs we conſider Madame *de Maintenon* as ſuch, nor any Dauphineſs. In the Memoirs of Madame *de Maintenon* we have a particular Account of the excellent Methods taken by her to form this Princeſs, who came to *France* at the Age of Eleven.

FINIS.

BRITISH
3 NO 83
MUSEUM

F I N I S.

BOOKS Printed for L. DAVIS and C. REYMERS.

1. MADAME de Maintenon's Letters. Volume the Firſt. Price bound 3s.

2. Memoirs of Madame de Maintenon; and of the laſt Age. Tranſlated from the French by the Author of the Female Quixote. 5 Vol. 15s.

3. Letters of the Marchioneſs de M***. Tranſlated from the original French of Mr. Crebillon, Author of the Skimmer, and other celebrated Novels. 3s.

4. The Hiſtory of CHARLES the TWELFTH King of Sweden. Giving a circumſtantial Account of the Wars in which this Prince engaged, and of the reſpective Battles which he fought: Particularly his Defeat of the Czar's Army, in the Battle of Narva; his Defeat of the Saxons at the River Duna; and at Pultuſk; his Conqueſts of Courland and Lithuania; his diſperſing 100,000 Muſcovites, in the Battle of Holloſin; his being defeated at Pultowa, and ſurprizing Retreat; his Scheme for a Deſcent into England; his beſieging Frederickſhall, and the Particulars of his Death there. The Whole including alſo the Hiſtory of Czar Peter the Great, Emperor of Muſcovy. By M. de Voltaire. 3s.

5. The Beauties of England, comprehended in a Pocket Volume; or, a View of the Public Structures, the Seats of the Nobility and Gentry,

try, the two Univerſities, the Cities, Market-Towns, Antiquities and Curioſities Natural and Artificial, for which this Iſland is remarkable; in which is included an Account of the Curioſities of London and Weſtminſter. Divided into the reſpective Counties. Being an Attempt to accommodate the Engliſh Traveller, with a ſmall portable Aſſiſtant, proper to direct him to every Thing curious and worthy his Attention. Pr. 3s.

6. Travels in Egypt and Nubia, by Frederic Lewis Norden, F. R. S. Captain of the Daniſh Navy, publiſhed by Order of the King of Denmark, and enlarged with Obſervations, &c. by Dr. Templeman; moſt elegantly printed in Two Volumes Folio, on a fine Writing Royal Paper, and illuſtrated with near Two Hundred Copper-Plates, beautifully engraved by the famous Marc Tuſcher of Nuremberg, from Deſigns taken by the Author himſelf upon the Spot.

7. An Octavo Edition of Captain Norden's Travels. Pr. 6s.

8. A Voyage to South-America; undertaken by Command of the King of Spain, by Don Geo. Juan, and Don Ant. de Ulloa, F. R. S. 2 Vol. 8vo. with Copper-Plates. Pr. 12s.

9. Travels through Part of Europe, Aſia Minor, ſeveral Iſlands of the Archipelago, Syria, Paleſtine, or the Holy Land, Mount Sinai, &c. By John Ægidius Van Egmond, Ambaſſador Extraordinary from the States General to the King

King of Naples and Sicily; and John Heyman, Profeſſor of the Oriental Languages at Leyden. Tranſlated from the Low Dutch. 2. Vol. 8vo. with Copper-Plates. 12s.

10. Travels in Turkey, and back to Adrinople, and thence to England. By the late Rev. Edmund Chiſhull, B. D. Chaplain to the Factory of the Turkey Company at Smyrna. Publiſhed from the Originals, with a Preface, by the late very eminent Dr. Richard Mead. Folio. 14s.

11. Memoirs of the HOUSE of BRUNSWICK, from the moſt early Accounts of that illuſtrious Family. With eight large Tables, comprehending the Genealogy of that Houſe. By Henry Rimius, Aulic Councellor to his late Majeſty the King of Pruſſia.

*** During many Centuries, there has ſcarcely been any Action of Conſequence, relative either to War or Peace, in which one or other of this Lineage has not acted a conſiderable Part; and its Antiquity is ſo great, that we find Traces of it long before the Birth of Chriſt; and can deduce it, without Interruption, for near fourteen Hundred Years. Quarto, Pr. 10s.

12. The Philoſophical Tranſactions, from the Year 1743, to the Year 1750. Abridged and diſpoſed under General Heads. The Latin Papers being tranſlated into Engliſh, by John Martyn, M. D. F. R. S. Profeſſor of Botany in the Univerſity of Cambridge, 2. Vol. Quarto, with LXXXVII Copper-Plates, Price 1 l. 10s.

N. B.

N. B. Dr. Martyn's Abridgement may be continued to the preſent Time by the Philoſophical Tranſactions at Large; which from the Year 1750 have been regularly publiſhed a Volume every Year; and are kept uniformly bound with the above Work, in 7 Vol. Quarto.

LORD SOMMER's TRACTS.

Such of the Subſcribers who neglected, at the Time of Publication, to take up the laſt eight Volumes (being the Third and Fourth Collections) of this rare and valuable Work, are hereby acquainted, that they have now an Opportunity of compleating their Sets; the few remaining Copies being in the Hands of L. Davis and C. Reymers, againſt Gray's-Inn, Holborn; who lately purchaſed the ſame from the Aſſignees of the Original Proprietor.

N. B. Out of Two Hundred and Ninety Purchaſers, who at this Time are poſſeſſed only of the Firſt Eight Volumes, no more than Forty-one can poſſibly compleat their Sets, that Number of Copies being all that are found to be perfect of the Third and Fourth Collections.——These latter Eight Volumes, which conſiſt of about Four Hundred ſcarce Tracts, relating chiefly to the Hiſtory and Conſtitution of this Country, are propoſed to be ſold at Three Guineas in Sheets.

*** There are a few of the Fourth Collection, in four Vols. to be had ſeparate. Pr. 1l. 11s. 6d. in Sheets. Three Guineas will be allowed for the Firſt Eight Volumes, to any Gentleman who may be inclined to part with them.

(2)

p. 4. marriage] – marr^d abt 1660 (2) to Scarron – (vol. 1. p 10)

Arms. – p 33.

Lost. – 211.

The greater part of these Letters are very moderately written – & by no means propes the merit, that might be expected from a person of madam de Maintenons ability – they appear to me to have been written, long after her death, from particulars, collected from her memoirs; – 3

Bodleian Library